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Report of the Secretary of War, communicating, in compliance with a resolution of the Senate, a map showing the operations of the army of the United States in Texas and the adjacent Mexican states on the Rio Grande; accompanied by astronomical observations, and descriptive and military memoirs of the country.

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REPORT  
OF  
THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

COMMUNICATING,

*In compliance with a resolution of the Senate, a map showing the operations of the army of the United States in Texas and the adjacent Mexican states on the Rio Grande; accompanied by astronomical observations, and descriptive and military memoirs of the country.*

MARCH 1, 1849.

Read.

FEBRUARY 18, 1850.

Ordered to be printed, and that 250 additional copies be printed for the use of the Topographical Bureau.

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
Washington, February 28, 1849.

SIR: I have the honor to submit herewith a report, with accompanying papers and maps, from the colonel of the corps of topographical engineers, prepared in pursuance of a resolution of the Senate of the 8th of August last, requiring the Secretary of War to furnish to Congress "a general map from the reconnaissance and surveys of the topographical engineers, showing the operations of the army of the United States in Texas and the adjacent Mexican states on the Rio Grande; to be accompanied with the astronomical observations, and descriptive and military memoirs of the country traversed by the troops of the United States."

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

W. L. MARCY, *Secretary of War.*

Hon. GEO. M. DALLAS,  
*President of the Senate.*

BUREAU OF TOPOGRAPHICAL ENGINEERS,  
Washington, February 28, 1849.

SIR: I have the honor to submit the report and maps of Major George W. Hughes, of the corps of topographical engineers, being a compliance in part with a resolution of the Senate of the 8th August, 1848. The general map required by that resolution is not yet completed.

Respectfully, sir, your obedient servant,

J. J. ABERT, *Col. Corps Top. Eng'rs.*

Hon. W. L. MARCY, *Secretary of War.*

REPORT

THE SECRETARY OF WAR

CONFIDENTIAL

Enclosed for the Secretary of the Senate is a copy showing the progress of the work of the United States in Texas and the adjacent States in the Rio Grande, accompanied by numerous maps, tables, and other data and military records of the country.

March 1, 1915.

Enclosure, 1/2 (1915)

Enclosed for the Secretary of the Senate is a copy showing the progress of the work of the United States in Texas and the adjacent States in the Rio Grande, accompanied by numerous maps, tables, and other data and military records of the country.

W. E. MANN, Secretary of War.  
Washington, February 29, 1915.

Enclosed for the Secretary of the Senate is a copy showing the progress of the work of the United States in Texas and the adjacent States in the Rio Grande, accompanied by numerous maps, tables, and other data and military records of the country.

Very respectfully,  
W. E. MANN, Secretary of War.  
Hon. Geo. M. Dallas,  
President of the Senate.

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Respectfully,  
J. A. ARNETT, Col. Capt. T. J. Arnett.  
Hon. W. E. Mann, Secretary of War.

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# MEMOIR

DESCRIPTIVE OF THE MARCH OF

A DIVISION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY,

UNDER THE COMMAND OF

BRIGADIER GENERAL JOHN E. WOOL,

FROM

SAN ANTONIO DE BEXAR, IN TEXAS, TO SALTILLO, IN MEXICO.

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By GEORGE W. HUGHES,

CAPTAIN CORPS TOPOGRAPHICAL ENGINEERS, CHIEF OF THE TOPOGRAPHICAL STAFF.

1846.

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*Directions for the insertion of the engravings and maps.*

Plate No. 1, frontispiece, to precede the introduction.

- “ “ 2, page 9.
- “ “ 3, “ 9.
- “ “ 4, “ 10.
- “ “ 5, “ 11.
- “ “ 6, “ 12.
- “ “ 7, “ 26.
- “ “ 8, “ 27.
- Map “ 1, “ 59.
- “ “ 2, at the end of the memoir. This is the large general map, showing the march of the division.

## INTRODUCTION.

Immediately after the breaking out of hostilities with the republic of Mexico, the government of the United States, for the purpose of bringing the war to a speedy conclusion by "conquering a peace" from the enemy, determined to invade her adjacent territories in several directions; and, simultaneously with the movement of General Taylor into Tamaulipas and New Leon from the lower Rio Grande, and of General Kearny into New Mexico and California, General Wool was directed to organize an expedition against the State of Chihuahua.

These conjoined movements were well devised, if it were the intention simply to reduce and to occupy the northern portion of Mexico from the Rio Grande to the Sierra Madre until a peace, on reasonable terms, could be secured; but if the ultimate object was to penetrate to the enemy's capital by the divisions of Taylor and Wool, it was extremely ill-advised; as, first, the forces were too widely separated for mutual support, and too weak for each to advance far as an independent corps. Second, the bases were too remote from the supplies; and the lines of operation much too long. The distance from San Antonio to the city of Mexico, by the way of Chihuahua, over any known route practicable for an army carrying with it artillery and munitions of war, cannot be less than two thousand miles, and from Camargo, on the Rio Grande, about eight hundred miles, being considerably longer than Napoleon's line of operation from his depots to Moscow. Beside this, the country to be traversed presented difficulties of no ordinary nature to an invading army, being for long distances destitute of water and subsistence—in fact, mere desert wastes. In both cases the communications must have been abandoned, thus violating one of the first principles of war, unless forced to it by a stern necessity.

It is fair, however, to presume that it was not the policy of government to attack the city of Mexico from the Rio Grande, although, at the time, it seemed to be contemplated in public opinion. Be this as it may, the occupation of the northern provinces was most fortunate, and exercised an important influence, in every respect, upon the glorious campaign which, commencing with the reduction of Vera Cruz, terminated with the capture of the Mexican capital and the restoration of peace.

The division under General Wool was concentrated at San Antonio de Bexar, in Texas, and consisted of one battery of field artillery of six guns, to which were added two small pieces captured from the Mexicans by the Texans, and manned with volunteers;\* one squadron of first and one squadron of second dragoons; one regiment of Arkansas horse; three companies of sixth infantry, with which was incorporated one independent company of Kentucky foot and two regiments of Illinois infantry; making in all about three thousand four hundred men. To this corps was also attached the usual allowance of officers of the general staff and of the staff corps. The battery had marched from Carlisle barracks, Pennsylvania, nearly the whole distance by land; the first dragoons, Arkansas mounted men, and sixth infantry, from posts in Arkansas; and the Illinois volunteers from Lavaca, Texas, by land. These different commands reached

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\* Those guns were lost at Buena Vista and retaken at Contreras.

San Antonio in excellent condition in the month of August, 1846. The squadron of second dragoons had been stationed for some months in the vicinity of the town.

It is due to General Wool to say, that with great industry, and that administrative capacity for which he is justly distinguished, he soon organized this almost chaotic mass into an efficient and well-drilled army, and had made preparations, within a few months, for supplying it with all the necessaries for a long campaign, in a country but little understood. The efforts to effect this were almost herculean, (requiring infinite labor and knowledge of a peculiar character, not always attendant upon eminent military or tactical ability,) and can be fully appreciated only by those familiar with the subject, and with the difficulties encountered; especially when a long interval of peace had left us nearly destitute of many of the essential materials of war. It is true that in these exertions the commanding general was ably seconded by intelligent, energetic, and experienced officers of the general staff, and of the quartermaster's and subsistence departments, and great credit was reflected upon all for the sagacity with which our wants were anticipated, and the promptitude with which they were supplied; and probably no better appointed army ever took the field.

As has been already intimated, the region of country to be traversed was almost entirely unknown. The jealousy of the Spaniards, and indolence of the Mexicans, had prevented the publication of maps based upon reliable authority, and, owing to the excursions of the savage tribes, the present race of Mexicans were but imperfectly acquainted with it, and therefore but little information could be procured from them, except in relation to the ordinary routes between their villages; in consequence of which, we were almost literally compelled to grope our way, and, like a ship at sea, to determine our positions by astronomical observations, and topographical parties were usually kept in advance to ascertain the lengths of the daily marches, the most advantageous places for encampments and supplies of water, fuel and forage. In this way we have been able to collect a vast amount of geographical information, which may prove useful and interesting.

Some years before, a Mr. Connolly conveyed a wagon train, on a trading expedition, from Red river to Chihuahua, passing considerably to the north of San Antonio, and crossing the Puerco\* river not far from the mouth of the Couchas, above the first cañon of the Rio Grande; but no connexion had ever been established with that trail from San Antonio, and it was doubtful whether a pass for that purpose could be found through the mountains.

Captain (afterwards General) Z. M. Pike stated in his narrative that a road formerly existed between Chihuahua and San Antonio *via* Presidio de Rio Grande, and that M. St. Croix, viceroy of Peru, took this road (through the Bolson Mappimi) in 1778, on his way from Chihuahua to Coquilla, Allares and Texas. This route has long since been abandoned on account of the excursions of the Indians, and no one could be found who had ever passed over it, or who even possessed any traditional knowledge of it. Its practicability, therefore, for an army with artillery, infantry and wagons, was extremely problematical. Soon after reaching

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\* Properly the Pecos river: it is called both on the maps. It has its rise beyond Santa Fe.

San Antonio I proposed (see appendix) to reconnoitre the different routes; but the want of sufficient escorts, and the exigencies of the service, I suppose, prevented it.

On arriving at Presidio Rio Grande it was pretty satisfactorily ascertained, from all that we could learn, that Santa Rosa, at the foot of a range of the Sierra Madre, was necessarily a point in our march, the direct San Fernando route, through the Bolson Mappimi, having been abandoned as surrounded with too many uncertainties. From thence it was said there were three practicable routes, either of which might be selected, viz: by the headwaters of the Sabinas river, through San Carlos and Alamo, by Cuatro Ciénegas, Santa Catarina and Santa Rosalia; or by Monclova and Parras. It was discovered, on further investigation, that the first route, being simply a rough mule track, for long distances absolutely destitute of both water and subsistence, would not answer the purpose. Whether the second was more favorable could not be determined, except by information to be obtained at Monclova and by actual reconnaissance, and during the protracted halt at that place (induced by the Monterey armistice) General Wool instructed me to make the examinations necessary to solve the question, which resulted in the strong conviction of its impracticability. (See memoir of a reconnaissance to Cuatro Ciénegas.)

These various explorations strengthened the previous impression that to reach Chihuahua it would be necessary to march by Parras, situated on the main road from Saltillo to that city. Parras was a strategic point of some importance, and fortunately, as it regarded future operations, General Wool determined to take it in his route. From that position he would be able easily to reach his original destination—to move on Durango or Zacatecas, or to form a junction with the army under General Taylor, as policy or necessity might dictate.

It was satisfactorily ascertained, on reaching Parras, that no further physical difficulties, except those merely of distance, remained to be surmounted, but that the large portion of the enemy's force, which had assembled for the defence of the threatened province, had been withdrawn for the purpose of strengthening the main army at San Luis, and that, therefore, the necessity of marching the whole division further in that direction no longer existed, leaving it free to act as circumstances might require. In the mean while news was received that Santa Anna, in the hope, by the rapidity of his movement, of overwhelming General Worth, who with a single brigade was occupying Saltillo, before he could be reinforced, had suddenly put his whole army in motion. In consequence of this information General Wool marched for Saltillo, and succeeded in uniting with General Butler (who had hastened up from Monterey) and with General Worth. And thus terminated the expedition destined for Chihuahua—the division being subsequently merged into the main army of occupation.

Santa Anna, finding that he could not deceive the vigilance of General Worth, and that the American troops thus concentrated were too strong for him to attack with any prospect of success, returned to San Luis Potosi to bide his time. On the withdrawal, soon afterwards, of a considerable portion of the "army of occupation" for the expedition to Vera Cruz, he again moved on Saltillo, *but did not reach it.* The fatal pass of

Buena Vista intervened, and in that bloody and glorious battle well did the "army of Chihuahua" perform its duty.\*

The following memoir, descriptive of the march of the column under General Wool from San Antonio to Saltillo, was written from time to time as leisure or circumstances would permit, in the midst of arduous duties and the difficulties incident to an active campaign; for even when the army was at a halt, the topographical engineers were busily engaged in reconnoitring the country for considerable distances, sometimes eighty miles from the camp. Very few changes in, or additions to, the original papers, have been made, which as fast as written were laid before the commanding general, and copies transmitted to the Topographical Bureau.

The reconnaissances during the march were principally made by Lieutenant Sitgreaves and myself, and the astronomical observations by Lieutenant Franklin. Lieutenant Bryan was for a short time attached to the personal staff of the commanding general, and was subsequently assigned to the command of a volunteer section of artillery connected with Captain Washington's battery.

Mr. Josiah Gregg, the author of "The Commerce of the Prairies," well known for his scientific attainments, accompanied the Arkansas cavalry, and frequently observed in company with Lieutenant Franklin. At my request, he furnished me with an interesting description of the march of the command to which he was attached from its rendezvous, on Red river, to San Antonio, which is appended to the following memoir.

The instructions from the Topographical Bureau, under which I acted, were not only general, but very minute in their character, requiring me, independently of such duties as might be assigned by the commanding general, to collect information in reference to the habits and disposition of the people, the geography, natural history, resources, military strength, statistics, and political history of the countries through which we might march; and I only regret that these important duties have not been more satisfactorily performed.

\*This movement has sometimes been sneeringly called "Worth's stampede," and I think it but an act of justice to that distinguished soldier, and to the truth of history, to say that, in a long and free conversation with General Santa Anna, at his hacienda of Encero, near Jalapa, in reply to a question from me, he said that it had not only been his intention to attack Saltillo at that time, but that a large portion of his army had left San Luis Potosi for that purpose, and was only recalled when it was ascertained that General Worth had made himself acquainted with the movement, and by his rapidity of action had procured a concentration of force to an extent beyond his (Santa Anna's) anticipation. He further stated that, knowing his own force was but badly provided, and would be greatly exhausted by the long desert which intervened between him and Saltillo, he did not think it safe to encounter the veteran troops of the United States army; and that he would not subsequently have attacked General Taylor, as he was aware that he fought to great disadvantage, but for the fact that his (Taylor's) division was composed mainly of new levies, who, he supposed, would scarcely stand his first demonstration.

General Santa Anna explained his policy to me, and said that from the fact of a reconnaissance having been made from Parras in the direction of Durango and Zacatecas, by order of General Wool, he was led to suppose that that general would move on Zacatecas as the advance of the American army, and that he had been informed General Wool was actually on his march in that direction; and therefore his calculation was to defeat us in detail—first crushing Worth, then beating Butler, when Wool, with his small column, would be completely cut off. This well-devised scheme, however, was fortunately frustrated by the vigilance of General Worth, who kept himself well informed of the movements of his skilful antagonist.

## MEMOIR.

TOPOGRAPHICAL BUREAU,  
Washington, January 20, 1849.

To Colonel J. J. ABERT,  
*Chief of Topographical Engineers:*

SIR: In compliance with a resolution of the Senate of the 8th August, 1848, I have the honor to submit the following descriptive memoir of the march of a division of the United States army under the command of Brigadier General John E. Wool, accompanied by the astronomical determinations of latitude and longitude of the most important points on the line of march.

On the 29th of August, 1846, the United States steamer transport John L. Day, on-board of which the topographical party under my command were passengers, entered the bay of Matagorda (after a stormy voyage of four days from New Orleans) by the pass Cavallo, in which we found eight feet water,\* and the next morning at high tide reached the town of Lavaca, in Texas, which had been selected as the depôt of supplies for General Wool's division, destined for the invasion of Chihuahua.

The next day (the 31st) I left, accompanied by First Lieutenant L. Pitgreaves, topographical engineers, for San Antonio, by the Goliad road, on the San Antonio river, (1) the two other officers of the corps, Lieutenants Franklin and Bryan, having remained behind for the purpose of making astronomical observations, with directions, after that duty was completed, to proceed to San Antonio, *via* the Gonzales road, on the left bank of the Río Guadalupe, sketching in the topographical features of the country, and determining the position of the most important points on the route. From the want of adequate transportation for the delicate astronomical instruments, a portion of these instructions were not executed.

We reached San Antonio on the 6th September, and there found the headquarters established, and nearly all the troops belonging to the expedition concentrated in the vicinity of that healthy and beautiful town. In a few days afterwards we were joined by Lieutenants Franklin and Bryan.

(For a description of the two roads leading from Port Lavaca to San Antonio de Bexar see appendix, A and B.)

The town of San Antonio is supposed to contain about two thousand inhabitants, mostly Mexicans; the greater part of the males are agriculturists and herdsmen, so far as they have any occupation. It has no manufactures, and but few mechanics—such as carpenters, masons, tailors, shoemakers, and blacksmiths.

The town (see special map) is built on both sides of the river of the same name, and is bounded on the west by the San Pedro: the principal part of the town, however, lies in a horse-shoe bend on the west bank of the river, and its streets are washed by its waters running rapidly through them. It is about five miles from the source of the river, in latitude 29°

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\*According to a survey since made by Captain Mackay, topographical engineers, there are nine feet water on the bar at extreme low water: the tide rises only six inches.



26' and longitude 98° 50' west of Greenwich. The longitude has not yet been precisely determined, and we are waiting, for this purpose, to make further observations on the satellites of Jupiter, which we hope to accomplish to-night.

The buildings belonging to the government in the town might be conveniently converted into hospitals and barracks for a considerable force. The Alamo, on the left bank of the river, if placed in a suitable state of repair, would accommodate a regiment, and might at the same time be rendered a strong defensive work, well supplied with water.

As a frontier post, it may be regarded as one of some importance. About one mile east of the Alamo is a strong tower, twenty-one feet square at base, thirty feet high, sixteen feet square at top, three stories high, with a look-out on top. It is built of stone, the walls three feet thick, with three loop-holes on each side. It is not arched. The entrance is from the east. Within a short distance of it stands another building, eighteen feet square at base, twelve feet high, and with a groined arch; the walls are three feet thick—the entrance from the west: it was obviously a magazine. The two buildings are defended on the southeast angle by a bastion with two long curtains enclosing the buildings on two sides. The advance works are of earth, and consist of a deep ditch and parapet. Between these works and the building was a well, now partially closed with rubbish.

Most of the land in the vicinity of San Antonio was formerly, and much of it still is, irrigated from the river and the San Pedro. It may, however, well be questioned whether this operation is not injurious rather than beneficial to the lands; for the soil being highly calcareous, and the water being nearly saturated with the same substance, too much carbonate of lime must, in the course of years, be deposited in the fields. The remedy for this excess may be found in deep ploughing, following in the rotation of crops. The country bears evidence of having been at one period in a high state of cultivation and fertility, supporting a large and concentrated population, who in time of danger sought refuge in the town and in the missions of the *Alamo*, *Conception*, *San Juan Espada*, and *San José* monastic fortresses, whose stately and melancholy ruins attest their former magnificence and grandeur.

It is stated, on the authority of the surveyor of Bexar county, that within the limits of our map nearly two thousand acres of land are now in corn, yielding on an average about thirty bushels to the acre—sixty thousand bushels; but this is probably an over-estimate. Corn usually sells at 50 cents per bushel: it is now bringing \$1 25, or rather more. For a great distance around San Antonio the grazing is excellent, and herds of cattle abundant. In ordinary times a good, well-broken ox is worth \$25; for beef, about \$9; or a cow and calf, about \$13: at present the prices are much higher. The cattle are of the old Spanish breed—the oxen large, with immense horns; rapid walkers, and strong. They are fed exclusively on herbage and fodder: they keep easily, and make good beef. The cows are bad milkers, but might be easily improved by a cross on the Durham or Devon.

The county of Bexar contains about four thousand inhabitants, including Castroville. Its territorial limits extend to the Rio Grande.

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\* The position of our camp is latitude 29° 26' 53".

According to the authority before mentioned, there are this year nearly eight hundred acres of corn growing on the Leona creek, averaging about thirty-five bushels per acre—twenty-eight thousand bushels. While the lands are rich in this region, the demand heretofore for agricultural productions has been so limited that there has been but little inducement to grow more grain than would suffice for the wants of the permanent population.

The San Antonio river has its source in a large spring, five miles north of the town, and, as far as our map extends, flows nearly due south. It becomes almost at once, in gushing from the rocks, a noble river, clear, full, and rapid in its course. For the first ten miles it rarely exceeds one hundred feet in width, and from three to six feet in depth. The principal fords below the infantry camp are at the town of San Antonio and at a short distance below the mission of Conception. The former is good and practicable for artillery: the latter is not so good, the water being not less than four feet deep, with a very rapid current. There are, however, many points where fords might be made accessible by cutting down the banks. The river in its upper waters varies but little in its level, and is not greatly affected by the heaviest rains. At San Antonio there is a wattle-bridge over the river, near the Alamo, recently repaired, or rather rebuilt, by the quartermaster's department, for military purposes.

One source of the San Pedro is on the Nacogdoches road, about two miles above the town. It is a small but beautiful stream, flowing to the rear of the town, and debouching into the river about two and a half below. I am inclined to regard the San Pedro as an off-shoot from the San Antonio, as it presents (on the Nacogdoches road, where it is first visible) more the appearance of a subterranean stream than a spring.

The rainy season usually commences about the autumnal equinox, and generally terminates with the vernal. I do not, however, understand that the rain is often excessive so as to break up the roads, but that there are generally slight showers daily during the period, and that scarcely any water falls during the dry season or summer.

As soon as the rainy season sets in the temperature falls, and the atmosphere, which is remarkably pure, becomes very agreeable. The vicinity of San Antonio is said to be very healthy, and there is apparently no cause for disease. Fresh meat rarely putrefies, but is gradually dried up by the action of the air. The sickness amongst the troops and teamsters is probably owing to their exposure while marching here, to their imprudence, and to the (merely temporary) effects of the water.

The temperature of the water is about  $76^{\circ}$  Fahrenheit in the morning. The thermometer the last week has ranged to  $98^{\circ}$  in the shade.

#### *Comparison of Mexican and English measure.*

Mexican.	English.
1 foot . . . . .	= $11\frac{1}{4}$ inches.
1 vara . . . . .	= $33\frac{1}{4}$ inches.
108 varas . . . . .	= 100 yards.
1,000 varas . . . . .	= 925 yards.
1,000 varas, sq. . . . .	= $176\frac{3}{4}$ acres.
1 labor . . . . .	= $17,725\frac{3}{4}$ rods.
1 litro . . . . .	= $4.428\frac{1}{10000}$ rods.
1 league = 5,000 varas	= $2\frac{3}{4}$ miles (nearly.)
1,900 $\frac{1}{10}$ varas . . . . .	= 1 mile.



In compliance with the direction of the commanding general, I left San Antonio, with the topographical staff, to precede the march of the army, on the 23d of September, at 5 o'clock p. m., having previously sent the wagons in advance. We found the party encamped on the west side of the Little Leona, seven miles from San Antonio, a tributary to the river of the same name, and uniting with it not far below the town. One of our two wagons having taken a wrong direction, did not join us till next morning. Our ride, on a course nearly due west, was over an open prairie, with occasional patches of musquette chaparral\*.

The Leona is a small and lovely stream of pure water, with high banks, discharging in the rainy season a large volume of water. It was, when we crossed it, about thirty feet wide and one foot deep. There are several thriving settlements on this creek, and a good deal of corn is grown.

The topographical party consisted of the following persons, viz:

George W. Hughes, captain topographical engineers;

L. Sitgreaves, 1st lieutenant topographical engineers;

W. B. Franklin, 2d lieutenant topographical engineers;

F. T. Bryan, brevet 2d lieutenant topographical engineers (temporarily detached);

Dan Drake Henrie, interpreter;

James Dunn, hunter and guide, (left three days afterwards, ill);

Two wagoners, four laborers, and two private servants.

We were furnished by the ordnance department with six rifles and a keg of ammunition.

*September 24.*—Left camp at 10 o'clock a. m., having waited until that time for the missing wagon to come up. The country immediately west of the creek is high and broken, and the road for more than a mile quite precipitous, when it suddenly changes to a beautiful open and rolling prairie, covered with a luxuriant growth of sweet and nutritious grasses. We saw plenty of game. The only bushes on our route were stunted musquette—a species of acacia, which, even in a green state, make excellent fuel. Stopped to noon on a little stream of good water, near a remarkable landmark called *Padre Monté*. We crossed during the day three small streams of pure water, and at 8 o'clock in the evening, after a march of eighteen miles, reached the Medina river, and encamped on its left bank a mile below the village of Castroville.

*September 25.*—The preceding day had been excessively hot, and the whole country seemed parched for the want of rain, the ground being cracked into large fissures. At 2 o'clock this morning the weather suddenly changed, the thermometer falling from 98° to 52° Fahrenheit, and a severe norther set in, accompanied with lightning, thunder, and rain, which fell in torrents. The greater portion of Texas and the adjacent Mexican provinces are subject to these sudden and extreme transitions of climate; which often prove deleterious to animal life. It cleared at 11 o'clock in the morning, when Lieutenant Sitgreaves was sent to examine the ford below the camp, on the old Presidio road, and to measure the width and depth of the ford at Castroville, while Lieutenant Franklin and myself made a reconnaissance of the country for several miles around on both sides of the river.

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\*The term chaparral is applied to a close thorny thicket.

The Medina is a truly lovely stream, with high banks, the ground on the west side rising into abrupt hills some 300 feet in altitude. At the ford, which is over a rocky ledge at the foot of a considerable fall, it is about 100 feet wide and two feet deep. Directly opposite is situated the fishing village of Castroville, on an extensive and rich plain formed by the receding of the highlands. The German settlement at this place, made under the auspices of Mr. Castro, a French gentleman, who obtained a large and valuable concession of territory from the republic of Texas, consists of about 700 inhabitants, who have brought with them to this wilderness the habits of industry, sobriety, and economy of their father-land.

There are two fords above the town—one called the cañon, two and a half miles distant, and is pretty good; rocky bottom, somewhat worn into holes, and rather dangerous for horses; the banks precipitous and rather marshy. It was here that the Mexican General Woll,\* in 1842, in his descent on San Antonio, crossed his artillery and infantry, and in his subsequent rapid retreat, passed over his entire army. Woll's ford, where the infantry crossed, is three miles beyond, but is now impracticable, owing to the mud since deposited several feet deep. There is said to be no other ford for thirty miles above. The ford below the village is passable, but not very good, the bottom being rather muddy.

*September 26.*—Temperature of water at 7 o'clock a. m., 62° Fahrenheit. Left at 9 o'clock, and crossed the Castroville ford. A mile beyond is a very bad and rocky hill, down which it is necessary to lock the wagon wheels: after which the country is open and level until the road intersects the cañon trail, when, turning suddenly to the left, (more to the west,) it gradually ascends to a considerable height, covered with a beautiful growth of live oaks, interspersed with musquette and bushes of the same species. Herds of deer were continually crossing our path, and we occasionally disturbed a wild turkey, or a zapolota (the Mexican vulture,) from his loathsome meal, who, lazily flapping his wings, circled around us and croakingly complained of the intrusion.

There is no water between the Medina and Quihé, a distance of ten miles. Being informed by our guide that there was no water for several miles ahead, we here encamped on the east side of the creek, in a very pretty, live oak grove. The water was good, and the grazing excellent. The country in the vicinity of the brook was well timbered with willow, live oak, and pecan. There is a small German settlement at this place, a branch of the Castroville immigration, which we found in a most wretched condition, the people having suffered greatly from sickness, caused probably by two small lakes of stagnant water in the vicinity. They may, however, be easily drained, and as they have considerable fall at this outlet, might be made available for water-power. This stream is a tributary to the Hondo, flowing into the Frio, which finally discharges into the Nueces. Temperature of water at 9 o'clock p. m., 71°.

*September 27.*—At 6½ a. m., temperature of water 65°. Left camp at

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\*On this expedition General Woll exhibited strategic talent of a high order. The Texans having learned that a force had assembled at Presidio for the invasion of their territory, despatched their most trusty spies to watch the enemy; but such was the secrecy of his movements, that he completely eluded their vigilance, crossed the Rio Grande almost in their presence, opened a new road 164 miles long, and entered San Antonio almost simultaneously with the scouts who had returned to report that there was no Mexican force east of the Rio Grande.

7 o'clock a. m. Our route, for several miles, was through a beautiful wide, and fertile bottom. The road to Lucky's creek is good. We found the creek, contrary to expectation, full of good water, two feet deep, and flowing clearly and rapidly. On the west bank is a lovely grove of large live oak, and a rich valley, almost boundless to the eye, of excellent grazing. An army of 10,000 cavalry might encamp here for a week, and not exhaust its luxuriance. The Lucky is usually dry; but, like most of the streams of western Texas, does not, apparently, depend for its supply of water on recent rains; for the geological formation, consisting mostly of cavernous limestone, affords many subterranean discharges, which at times leave large rivers nearly dry, and swell small brooks (often dry) into respectable rivers, without any obviously adequate cause. Hence, to some extent, the uncertainty of finding water at particular localities, except after very recent examinations. The distance from the Quihé is four miles. To the Hondo, four miles, the road is rough, and the descent bad, bottom not good, and ascent to the west bank pebbly. Seven miles brought us to a small stream of good water, not noticed in any of the maps; banks low, bottom rocky, water eighteen inches deep, (presumably to be generally dry,) grazing good—one and a half mile, over a level plain, to the Saco. This creek resembles the Hondo or Sycamore, (for it is known by both names,) but the crossing is not so bad, and it contains rather more water, which in the latter river stands in pools; but it is represented to be, a few miles above the crossing, a flowing stream as large as the Medina; it has probably a subterranean discharge. We encamped on the west bank of the Saco: the grazing was not very good. The day was excessively hot, and the night very cold. The scenery in the neighborhood is eminently grand and picturesque, exhibiting on the river banks high mural escarpments, which assume many striking and interesting imitative forms and fantastic shapes.

*September 28.*—Left at 7 o'clock 25 minutes. For about four miles the road is rough, and the country much broken with abrupt ridges and two very steep ascents in that distance. The timber mainly live oak, in extensive groves. We then entered upon a level prairie of great extent, and covered with a coarse sedge; grazing bad. At nine miles, reached the Ranchero creek; no running water here, but that which is standing in pools is good; the descent and ascent bad, and the bottom covered with large and loose stones. To the Cañon or Sabinal the country is rather barren, and but few live oaks to be seen. The timber principally musquette. This stream is also called the Cypress, and many fine trees of that species grow on its banks; best camping ground on west side; distance four miles. To Little or Indian creek five miles; no water except in pools, but that good; timber musquette; grazing but tolerable; best camping ground on west side, where we stopped for the night; very cold after midnight.

*September 29.*—Left at 7 o'clock 10 minutes; day hot; saw no game; passed over a barren and uninteresting country; very few live oaks, and but little wood of any description. Arrived on the Frio at 12 o'clock, distance nineteen miles, and encamped on the west bank; a deep and beautiful stream, the water pure and cold; several large live oaks on the banks; bad grazing on east bank, good on west; encamped on west bank.

*September 30.*—Temperature of air 58°—of water 57°; eight miles to Leona; for some distance good grazing; for four miles further the road is rough and rocky; for one mile before reaching the Leona, the ground is covered

with a thick growth of musquette, different varieties of oak, among which the live oak, pecan, &c., mostly young. The Leona is a beautiful stream, about fifty feet wide, and the valley wide and extremely rich. It is at all times full of water, and preserves a nearly uniform level; its banks are low, and the passing bad; the bottom firm, but banks muddy; water good, and about three feet eight inches deep. We encamped on the west side, in a pleasant grove of live oaks and pecans; grazing good.

October 1.—Accompanied by Lieutenant Franklin, made a reconnaissance of the river for seven miles above the camp on the east bank, searching for another ford, which proved unsuccessful. For the whole of that distance, and apparently for a much greater distance, the valley is wide, well timbered, and extremely rich, the sweet grasses growing with great luxuriance. Returning, we ascended with great labor the "Pilot's Knob," a remarkable and steep basaltic hill about five hundred feet high, from which we (probably the first white men who looked out from its summit) enjoyed a most extensive and magnificent view for many miles around, and could trace the graceful and meandering course of the river by its fringe of woods far up to its mountain source—its nacimiento, or birth, as it is called in the poetical language of the Mexicans—thus correcting the erroneous statements, made upon respectable authority, that it took its rise in a large spring near the base of the Pilot's Knob. Such a spring—and a noble one it is—does exist at this place, and is the fountain-head of a considerable affluent to the Leona, but is certainly not deserving of the credit it has received of being the parent of that lovely water nymph. A short distance below our camp is a fine water-fall, which will doubtless not long be left to waste its beauties on the desert wilds, but will be turned to some useful purpose subservient to the wants of civilized man.

Returning to camp found myself quite ill from an attack of fever and dysentery, induced by alternate exposure to the hot sun, heavy dews, and low temperature of the nights: for, having discovered that a large band of Comanches were on our trail, we have been compelled for the last few nights to keep our small party constantly on watch and patrol, selecting strong positions for encampments; their object was probably to steal our horses.

October 2.—The engineers came in with the pontoon train early; the general and staff and advance of the army arrived in the afternoon, where they remained for the rest of the day.

October 3.—Still ill. The advance moved on, about 9 o'clock a. m., towards Rio Nueces, which was about twelve miles off; encamped on the east side of the river with the staff, artillery, and squadron of the 1st dragoons; pasturage pretty good; the river is about three hundred feet wide, crossing good; water excellent, and about two feet deep.

October 4.—Left at 6 o'clock a. m.; ground low, and in wet weather difficult for wagons. To Arrest creek nine miles, and thence to Dry creek, six miles further, when the country more dry, elevated, and broken to La Chapperosa, seven miles, where we encamped, making our march to-day twenty-two miles. The water, which was muddy and bad, stands in pools; grazing pretty good. The latter portion of the road to-day was sandy; the ground covered with musquette thicket.

October 5.—Still ill, and travelling in a wagon. Last night Lieutenant Franklin was sent forward to look for water and grazing, with an escort of the 1st dragoons; sent back his report early in the morning. Five

miles to the Saladino, a very pretty, small stream of pure water, which has been always represented as being brackish. The natural crossing was deep and boggy; but a bridge erected by Colonel Harney having been repaired by the engineers, we were enabled to cross without difficulty, after a short delay. The grass on the west side of the stream was good. To Fish creek seven miles, then eight miles to our encampment, making twenty miles march; water standing in pools, but palatable; grazing also good, but fuel scarce.

*October 6.*—Left at 6 a. m., and marched ten miles to the Cuevas; scarcely any drinkable water on the route. At our encampment the water stood in pools, covered with a thick scum, and not very palatable; grazing good and fuel scarce.

*October 7.*—Remained this day on the Cuevas.

*October 8.*—Moved on to the Rio Grande, eleven miles, and encamped on the west bank of the river, where we found abundance of food, water, and grass, but very small supplies of fuel.

General Wool left San Antonio on the 28th of September with the advance and main body of the army, consisting of nineteen hundred and fifty-four men, and reached the Rio Grande after a march, including stoppages, of eleven days. The rear-guard, under Inspector General Churchill, remained some days longer in San Antonio, for the purpose of bringing the additional supplies, some of which had not yet come up from Lavaca.

On arriving, after a toilsome march, at the extreme southwestern limits of our wide-spread republic, and looking out upon the noble river whose swift currents washed the conterminous boundaries of the two countries, the greatest enthusiasm prevailed; and as the glorious flag of the stars and stripes was for the first time displayed in that far-off wilderness, many an eye glistened with patriotic emotion, and many a pulse beat high with the hope of future expectation. Alas! how many of that gallant band repose peacefully in the bosom of that country upon which they then gazed with mingled feelings of deep intent and of dark uncertainty.

*Resumé of distances on our line of march from San Antonio de Bexar to the Rio Grande.*

To the Leone.....	7 miles.	
Medio.....	5 "	
San Lucas Spring.	4 "	
Taos creek.....	4 "	
Medina river.....	5 "	..25 miles from Bexar.
Quihé creek.....	10 "	
Lucky's creek ...	4 "	
Hondo.....	6 "	
Small creek.....	6½ "	} Not mentioned in any of the maps; water good and abundant.
Saco river.....	1½ "	
Ranchero.....	9 "	
Sabinal.....	4 "	

\* General Wool followed what is called "Woll's road," it having been opened by that general, as stated in another place. Although longer than the other roads, it is more frequently travelled in consequence of its crossing the water-courses near their sources, and being, therefore, more easily forded. There are three roads from San Antonio to Presidio, but the lower road is rarely used. There is a road diverging from our route near and west of the Nueces river to San Fernando, crossing the Rio Grande about twenty-five miles above the Presidio ford.



To the Little Sabinal . . . .	5 miles.
Rio Frio . . . . .	9 " . . 80 miles from Bexar.
Leona . . . . .	8 "
Nueces . . . . .	12 " . . 100 miles from Bexar.
Arrest creek . . . . .	9 "
Dry creek . . . . .	6 "
Chapperosa . . . . .	7 "
Saladino . . . . .	5 "
Fish creek . . . . .	7 "
Creek . . . . .	8 "
Cuevas . . . . .	10 "
Rio Grande . . . . .	12 "

164 miles from San Antonio to west bank of the Rio Grande.

Observations for the determination of longitude and latitude have been made as often as practicable; but as they have not all been reduced, I have thought it best not to give an imperfect list of them, but to have them designated on the topographical map which Mr. Sitgreaves is preparing.

*October 10.*—Crossed the river with several officers of the staff under orders from the commanding general, for the purpose of selecting a camp beyond the Presidio. The Rio Grande del Norte at this place is truly a noble river, with high banks, never overflowed, well deserving of its name—the "*Great River of the North.*" At the ford it is eight hundred and sixteen feet wide, water nearly uniformly three and a half feet deep, bottom hard gravel, and current rapid. Several wagons crossed to-day, but with considerable difficulty. The party was escorted by a squadron of 2d dragoons, under the command of Colonel Harney, which encamped at a very pretty position, near a hacienda, about two miles beyond Presidio.

Presidio del Rio Grande is about five miles from the river, the general course of the road being south 52° west. It is a town of about twelve hundred inhabitants, pleasantly situated on a small creek, furnishing abundant water for irrigation, flowing into the river a few miles below the ford. There is a good deal of corn, cotton, sweet potatoes, beans, and sugar-cane grown in the vicinity, and fruits are plentiful. The town, built of adobes, or unburnt bricks, is in a dilapidated condition. It was created, by an edict of the king of Spain, in 1772, a military post, and prison for army convicts. About one mile in the direction of the ford are the ruins of an old monastery, erected as a mission by the Jesuits. Its walls are thick, and built of stone, and are still in a tolerable state of preservation, and might at little expense be rendered a strong defensible position. Within the town is a stone tower, built for and formerly occupied as a guard-house. The inhabitants are said to be extremely hostile to us, but did not manifest it by any offensive acts, but, on the contrary, were kind and civil in their deportment.

At night returned to camp on the east bank of the river.

*October 11.*—Lieutenants Sitgreaves and Bryan were sent to examine Woll's ford, or rather ferry, where Woll crossed with his whole army on his expedition to San Antonio, about one and a half mile above the camp. At this point the river is some six hundred feet wide, very rapid, and not fordable. Opposite to it, on the right bank, there are several large plantations of sugar-cane, corn, and cotton. In the afternoon exam-

inations were made below the ford, but no good crossing place could be found. About three miles below the camp the river is broken into several cascades, over which boats can safely pass only in floods. To-day a flying-bridge was put in operation by Captain Fraser, of the engineers who had built pontoons in San Antonio for the purpose, which were transported to this place in wagons. For the purpose of protecting it, and to keep open the communication with San Antonio, where Colonel Churchill still was with the rear-guard and a portion of the supplies, the engineers were directed to construct defensive works on both banks, and two companies of volunteers were left behind as a guard. Lieutenant Franklin was occupied with the astronomical calculations.

*October 12.*—To-day the whole army, wagons, &c., crossed the river, the infantry passing over the flying-bridge, and marched through Presidio encamping about four miles south of the town. The grazing here was good, but the water bad, being hard, saline, sulphurous, and unhealthy, in consequence of which we were compelled to dispense with the soldier's favorite dish, bean-soup.

*October 13.*—Went into Presidio by order of the commanding general, for the purpose of obtaining information in relation to the routes to Santa Rosa. Met General Shields on his way to camp from Camargo. He gave me the first authentic intelligence of the details of the battle of Monterey, and of the capitulation. Yesterday, as General Wool reached the right bank of the Rio Grande, a Mexican officer, with an escort of lancers, presented himself to him with a communication from the political chief of the State of Coahuila, enclosing a copy of the articles of capitulation, and complaining that General Wool's march was in direct contravention of its provisions.

This, however, was not the General's construction of that convention; and he returned for answer, that he should continue his forward movement. The information procured in the town was not very satisfactory. We learned that there was a direct road over the mountains to Monclova, but that it was probably not practical for artillery and wagons; that there was a direct road to Santa Rosa by the way of Peyote, but the same objection existed to it as in the first case. The conclusion was, that, all things considered, it would be more certain to take the more circuitous way through San Fernando de Rosas.

*October 14.*—Yesterday and to-day, Lieutenant Bryan was occupied in surveying the roads in the vicinity of Presidio.

I received orders to proceed to-morrow morning, escorted by a squadron of dragoons, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Roane, of the Arkansas mounted men, on the way to Santa Rosa; and on reaching that town, to wait for the advance of the army, or for further instruction. The object was to reconnoitre the country, especially in reference to supplies, water, and encampments, with directions to communicate the information thus obtained daily to the commanding general.

*October 15.*—Left the Presidio camp at 7½ o'clock in the morning, accompanied by Lieutenant Franklin, with Pike's and Preston's companies of mounted men. There was no water to be found until we arrived within two miles of the town of San Juan de Nava, although the whole country was obviously once irrigated and in a high state of cultivation, as we noticed everywhere dry ditches, once filled with water, and frequently passed houses in ruins. As far as the eye could reach on both sides, we saw nothing but a wide-spread champaign country, bearing

vidence of former prosperity. It is now nothing but a desert waste, abandoned to the dreaded Camanches, or the not less terrible Mescaleros and Apaches, who have driven the timid inhabitants from their rural dwellings, and cooped them up within the precincts of the villages, converting this once smiling garden into a howling wilderness.

As we approached Nava, it presented a most beautiful and attractive appearance. The fields were cultivated, with fresh pure water running in every direction; large trees surrounded it, and the white dome of the village church glittered in the sun through their foliage; but alas! " 'twas distance lent enchantment to the view;" for, on entering it, we found it filthy, the houses in a most dilapidated condition, and the inhabitants dirty and miserable. It numbers in population about 1,000 souls. The alcalde, a half-naked Indian, and the padre, called on us, and through their intervention we procured an abundance of supplies, and ascertained that a sufficiency of beef, corn, and fodder could be obtained for the army, at reasonable prices, as many of those articles had been brought from the neighboring settlements in anticipation of our visit.

We marched through the town; but not finding a convenient camping ground, as the whole country was intersected with irrigating ditches, we returned to the east side, and there pitched our tents. Wood was very scarce, and we could with difficulty find enough to cook our food. I directed the alcalde to have a large supply furnished the next day for the army; which was fortunate, as a severe norther set in the next night, soon after the arrival of the troops.

The length of march to-day was about twenty-five miles.

*October 16.*—Resumed our march at 7 o'clock a. m. For some two miles the country was cultivated; after which, all again was desolate, until we reached San Fernandez de Rosas, a distance of eleven miles. About four miles this side of the town, a road branches off to the villages of Morales and San Juan, and is in fact the direct route to Santa Rosa; and was afterwards followed by Colonel Churchill. It is some eight or ten miles shorter than the road by San Fernandez.

San Fernandez de Rosas (of the roses) is pleasantly situated on the left bank of the Escandido,\* a beautiful and limpid stream of pure cool water, which, rising about fifteen miles to the southwest, winds gracefully around two sides of the town, and discharges into the Rio Grande, thirty miles above the Presidio ford. It is extensively used for purposes of irrigation; and the valley of San Fernandez is broad, rich, and productive. The town contains about 2,000 inhabitants, and two plazas, around which are built the better class of houses, which are large, neat, and comfortable. On the main plaza is the parochial church, a building of some architectural pretension. The whole town, surrounded as it is with a belt of large trees, wears a pleasing aspect, in striking contrast with Presidio and Nava; and the people are well dressed, presenting an agreeable appearance. A great deal of corn and numerous herds of cattle are produced in the vicinity, and near the neighboring villages of Morales and San Juan; the former containing about 900, and the latter about 700 souls.

The escort, after halting a short time for refreshments, passed through the town, re-crossed the stream, and encamped about six miles beyond, having changed our course considerably to the south after leaving the

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\* "Concealed brook."



town. There are several ranchos near the camp, from which we procured an abundant supply of corn, fodder, and other necessaries. We found the water and grazing good, and fortunately plenty of fuel, as a violent norther set in about 12 o'clock at night, accompanied with a cold drifting rain. An encampment for the army was selected some four miles this side of San Fernandez, on a plain affording good grazing, with running water on both sides, and plenty of wood convenient.

October 17.—Broke up our camp at 8 o'clock, the most of the men being stiff and uncomfortable from the effects of last night's norther, and from the sudden change from excessive heat to cold. The wind was chilly, raw, and penetrating. A march of eleven miles over a barren and uncultivated country brought us to the celebrated *Santa Rita* springs, the sources of the water which supplies the villages of San Juan, Morales, and Nava, and which formerly was conducted as far as our Presidio camp, irrigating the whole intermediate country, a distance of forty miles, through which it was carried in artificial channels. The surplus water is now wasted after passing Nava, near which it has formed an extensive and pestilential marsh.

The numerous springs at this locality unite in several small, deep, and picturesque lakes, much frequented by several kinds of water fowl. We encamped near them in a fine grove of live oak. There is a considerable growth of wood and timber in the vicinity, but the grazing is not good. The ground is moist, and the grass, although luxuriant, is coarse and sedgy. This position was recommended to General Wool as his camping ground. Several Mexican carts had followed us to-day laden with corn, and after supplying our own horses, they were directed to wait the arrival of the main army; the last corn, as we were informed, that could be obtained this side of Santa Rosa. Our march to-day was short, in consequence of representations made to us that no water could be found for a distance of more than thirty miles ahead. It was also a convenient day's march for the army. Several Mexicans came in during the night for protection against the Indians, who were prowling about in small parties.

October 18.—Left camp at 7 o'clock in the morning. For about three miles our road passed over an undulating country, well wooded, with a luxuriant growth of sweet grasses. Another mile brought us to the intersection of the San Juan and Morales road. The ground soon afterwards became very broken, and we began gradually to ascend by a tortuous course the Sierra de San José, a range of hills which we observed to our left from the time of leaving the Presidio camp. They trend nearly northeast and southwest, and the Rio Grande bursts through them about ten miles below the town of Presidio. It is over these highlands that the Peyoté and Monclova roads pass. Our road was good, and reached the summit of the hills with easy grades. They are covered with a thin growth of grass; and many varieties of the cactus, the sotol, (from which the Mexican mescal is distilled,) and an occasional maguey, (*agave Americana*;) the palmetto, and yucca *abrifolia*, make their appearance, the first that I have noticed on our march. The rocks are of fossiliferous limestone, and it is said that mines of copper and silver were formerly worked in these mountains. We passed the summit of this range about eight miles from yesterday's camp, and then commenced descending, by a road similar to that by which we had ascended, to the Llano de San José, a wide and extensive, but sterile plain. From the top of these hills we

caught the first sight of the Sierra Gordo, sometimes called the Sierra Santa Rosa, a spur of the great Sierra Madre, or Mother Mountain. As the mist which rested like a veil on its lofty peaks was gently lifted by the sun, the view was most grand and imposing. We overlooked the great plain before us, which was limited in that direction only by a wall of serrated mountains rising to the height of 4,000 feet, and stretching to the north and south as far as the eye could reach, and apparently presenting an impassable barrier to our further progress. We could also recognise the course of the two large rivers which flow through the plain, by the woods which fringe the banks. From the same point we looked back upon the lovely valley of San Fernández.

At a distance of sixteen miles from Santa Rita, we found a pool of clear, fresh-looking water that the advance-guard had passed, under the assurance of the Mexicans, who were with us, that it was brackish, nauseous, and poisonous, not fit even for the horses. We had received uniformly the same accounts of it from all quarters, but it looked so cool and tempting, and our thirsty animals showed such a positive desire to drink it, that I determined to try it, and to my surprise found it as pleasant to the taste as it was inviting to the eye. What had given rise to the notion of its bad qualities I could never ascertain; but that it was unfit for use and poisonous to animals, was certainly entertained by the people of the country; and no Mexican could be induced to drink it or permit his horse to use it, but preferred to ride fourteen miles further to the Rio Alamas without water. The pasturage here was good, but fuel very scarce. Sent back a man to General Wool recommending this place as a suitable encampment for the army. The pool occupied the bed of a large creek with steep banks, discharging a large quantity of water in the rainy season, at which time it must be impassable. It drains into the Alamas. The sierra of San José divides the drainage of the valley of San Fernández from that of Santa Rosa, both of which, however, discharge into the Rio Grande.

From the pool it was fourteen miles to the Rio Alamas (or cotton-wood river,) the first ten miles of which was over a level prairie of good grass; the next four was a pretty rapid descent to the river, where we encamped. The Peyoté road comes in at the ford about one mile back. We found the banks of the river covered with a thick growth of trees, principally cotton wood—a species of poplar. There is also in this valley a fine growth of nutritious grasses.

October 19.—The Alamas is about 100 feet wide, four feet deep, hard pebbly bottom, and the current a perfect torrent. Last night and this morning we examined the river for several miles above and below, but could find no other ford. It was generally deeper in other places, although the current was less and the bed of the stream soft. With great exertions we succeeded in getting over; the small wagon, containing the instruments, having been secured with ropes to prevent its being carried off. From all previous Mexican accounts we were induced to believe that we should not be able to cross at all. As it was, we narrowly escaped losing one mule, and two men who were forced from their horses by the current, and were rescued with great difficulty.

After crossing the river, the road turns suddenly to the left; and half a mile further on, the roads diverge, the left one leading to the ferry over the Sabinos river, just above its junction with the Alamos, being the most

direct route to Monclova; and the right hand one to the Sábines ford, being the Santa Rosa road. At the ferry the river is not fordable. Four miles from the Alamos we came to the *Rio Sábines*, or Cypress river, which takes its designation from the numerous and large cypress trees growing on its banks—a stream neither as wide, deep, nor as swift as the former, although from their confluence it gives its name to their united waters until they discharge into the Salado, which is an affluent to the Rio Grande at Guerrera. This river at times overflows its banks to a great distance, showing that in the rainy season it discharges an immense volume of water, when, from its depth and the velocity of the current, it must be utterly impassable even with boats. For this reason neither of the two rivers could be permanently bridged without incurring an enormous expense. When Santa Anna took this direction in his celebrated invasion of Texas in 1834, which terminated so disastrously at San Jacinto, he impressed all the people of the surrounding country, and compelled them to build temporary bridges (which were swept off by the next flood) over both rivers, for the passage of his troops. The army not being provided with a pontoon train, which had been left at Presidio for the use of the rear guard, experienced great difficulty in crossing these rivers; but, by making a bridge of the loaded wagons, which were sufficiently heavy to stem the torrents, the infantry were passed over without loss; several mules and horses, however, were drowned.

A short distance from the right bank we found an excellent camping ground, with plenty of fuel and grass. The water in both streams is excellent. A march of four miles brought us to the "three ranchos," a good camping ground on a cool and beautiful mountain brook; and four miles still further on is another good encampment on the same water-course; and one and a half mile further, about half a mile from the town of Santa Rosa, we encamped on the left bank of the above mentioned stream, in a broad and lovely plain, verdant with grass, and with waving fields of corn and the sugar cane, almost at the foot of a magnificent volcanic mountain range, whose jagged peaks rose to an elevation of some 4,000 feet above the level of the plain.

These mountains were visible from the banks of the Sábines, and indeed we caught a glimpse of them from the summit of the Sierra San José; and as we approached them, all were exhilarated by the contrast between this beautiful spectacle and the dull monotony of the level prairies which we had traversed so long as to deem them almost interminable.

Soon after leaving the Sábines we were met by a courier from the civil authorities of Santa Rosa, who announced to us that the municipality would meet us in the road and tender to us the formal rendition of the town. After encamping, the principal officers of the command and a small escort entered the town with the alcalde, and it was agreed that to-morrow we should take possession; accordingly, on the 20th of October, the squadron marched into town with flags flying and sabres drawn, and we accepted the surrender of Santa Rosa, which had been freely and officially tendered by the civil authorities. A few invalid soldiers under the command of a superannuated colonel, who had been left behind by Colonel Castaneira, were disarmed, and the guns placed in charge of the alcalde. The arms were of British manufacture, and bore the Tower proof-mark.

There is a difficult mule track from Santa Rosa to Santa Catarina

through the mountains, but nothing which can be called a road. Its general direction is south. Presidio de Bavia (an old military post) is N. W., (about) 80 miles distant, on a pretty good road: from thence to Chihuahua there is a mule track. By the way of San Fernando and Bavia is the shortest route to Chihuahua; but whether practicable for an army, is a doubtful matter.

*Resumé of distances from the Rio Grande to Santa Rosa.*

To Presidio Rio Grande.....	5 miles.
Our camp.....	4 "
Nava.....	24 "
San Fernando.....	11 "
Camp.....	6 "
Santa Rita springs.....	11 "
Waterpool.....	16 "
Rio Alamos.....	14 "
Rio Sabinos.....	4 "
Santa Rosa.....	10 "
	<hr/>
	105
	104
	<hr/>

209 miles.

*from San Antonio to Santa Rosa.*

Santa Rosa is agreeably situated, at the very foot of a lofty range of mountains called Monté Rosa, elevated by igneous action. The outlines are of volcanic origin, and are formed of basalt and lavas. The high peaks consist of limestone, overlaying a schistose slate, in which the silver ore is found. It is of a very dark blue color. The lodes of different metals, particularly lead and silver, are said to be numerous, and their yield extremely rich. There has been, since the expulsion of the Spaniards, no systematic or intelligent working of the mines in this district, and the veins are usually abandoned as soon as the water fills the shafts. The workings I have seen, it appeared to me, could be easily drained by adits for many years to come, without incurring the expense of pumping. The principal ores are silver and lead, and I am inclined to believe that this is one of the richest mining regions in Mexico. The usual process of separation of the metals consists in first pulverizing the ores and washing out the dust and light matter with water; the remaining portion is put into an elbow furnace, heat applied, the scoria raked out on one side, and the metallic silver left behind in a kind of retort. The amalgamation process has never been introduced here.

Santa Rosa is said to contain three thousand inhabitants, but I doubt if its population exceeds two thousand. It is well watered from mountain streams; its climate is agreeable and salubrious; and a good deal of corn and sugar are produced here; but still the town wears that appearance of decay so common in Mexico. Its former prosperity depended on its mining operations, which have been nearly entirely suspended for many years by the depredations of the Indians. The old laws of Spain, "the laws of the Indies," in relation to mining and mining interests, are still in existence, and are said to be very judiciously framed. The fee simple of the mines belongs to the government, and leases, with certain privi-

leges, are granted to individuals at very moderate rates. Any person discovering a new mine, or one that has been abandoned, may declare it; that is, may take a lease of it, on application to the proper authorities, and by complying with certain prerequisites, amongst which he is to work the mine a certain number of days each year on penalty of forfeiture. The inhabitants of Santa Rosa are generally federalists, and friendly to the United States. Our camp was continually crowded with men, women, and children, from early in the morning until retreat, and we were freely supplied "with all the delicacies of the season." Baskets of nice cakes, confectionary, and fruits were sent in as presents to the officers; and when our men visited the town, the people were watching at the doors to invite them into their houses to partake of their hospitality. It was quite amusing to see how soon they fraternized, and it was evident that the population hailed us as protectors and deliverers; and, in fact, more than one proposition was made to me to encourage a *pronunciamiento* against the Mexican government.

A very large and rich mine was formerly worked within two miles of the town by a company, at the head of which was the Spanish governor of the province, who held his court in Santa Rosa with much splendor. The mine was worked very skilfully, if we may judge by the large adits and mills, the ruins of which we saw. The mining was in successful operation (yielding vast quantities of silver, according to the popular account) when the revolution commenced, which soon drove the proprietors from the country, and with them all safety and enterprise. During the Spanish domination, despotic as it was, Mexico must have presented a prosperous and interesting appearance, for everywhere are seen the monuments of former greatness. At that time, too, the security of life and property (except for offences against the State) was perfect, and the revolution was the result rather of social than of political causes, in which, by-the-by, most revolutions of separation find their origin.

#### CAMP NEAR MONCLOVA, MEXICO,

November 18, 1846.

SIR: In compliance with your instructions, I have the honor to submit the following journal of the route from Santa Rosa to this place.

The army marched from Santa Rosa to-day (Sunday, October 25.) The road runs along the foot of level plateaus of table land, extending from the base of the Santa Rosa mountains, in nearly an easterly direction, for eight and a half miles, when it turns southeasterly, through an opening in the plateaus, four miles to the "Arroyo Alamo," a shallow stream, with broad pebbly bed and low banks, upon which the army encamped. For the first eight miles the country is pretty well covered with the usual chaparral growth of musquette, Spanish bayonet, &c. We crossed also in this distance two small rivulets; one about three, and the other six miles from camp, and one or two dry beds of mountain streams—neither difficult for wagons. The rest of the road was across open rolling prairie:

Monday, October 26.—Our course to-day was S. 40° E. 7½ miles to the Carrecitos (little caves,) and one mile farther to the Sans, both small beds, with the water standing in pools; the country open and rolling. From the Sans the road deflects gradually towards the mountains, to a



course about S.  $5^{\circ}$  W.  $8\frac{1}{2}$  miles to the Ahuza; (buzzard,) a fine running stream, two hundred and fifty feet across the bed, the stream being divided into several rivulets, by stony islands, the whole bed stony, and the banks low and firm.

**Tuesday, 27th.**—Three miles to the Guachapina, and four more to the Piletas—both small prairie streams. Five miles beyond crossed the Lampasos, a considerable stream, but the water is sulphurous, and is said to be poisonous for cattle. The country rolling and covered with small bushes, Spanish bayonets, and varieties of cacti. The maguey (agave Americana) begins here to make its appearance in considerable numbers. A short distance east of the Piletas a road turns off to the right towards a pass in the mountains. It had the appearance of having been recently travelled by wagons. Thirteen miles further on, we came to the "hacienda de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de los Hermanas," about a mile beyond which, upon a small stream, whose source is a hot spring with a temperature of  $111^{\circ}$  F., we encamped. This spring is walled in, and is a place of considerable resort by the fashionable of Monclova. This hacienda numbers one hundred and sixty peons, and has a large extent of ground, say one thousand acres, in cultivation. It is situated by three small knolls, called "Los Hermanas," (the sisters, from which it derives its name,) lying between the Guachapinas and the northern extremity of the Lampasos mountains—the two ranges being here not more than three miles apart. The latter range is said to extend to Monterey. A cold, drizzling rain set in about four o'clock, as we commenced pitching our tents. The rear-guard and train did not arrive till after dark.

**Wednesday, 28th.**—Remained in camp.

**Thursday, 29th.**—Two miles to the Nadadores, or Arroyo de Carmil, which we crossed by a bridge. It contains brackish water, running between steep clay banks. Between the Nadadores and the Monclova river, half a mile further on, is an old hacienda (del Tapado) occupied only by peons, but with considerable cultivation in its vicinity. The road from here continues along the left bank of the Monclova, five and a half miles to the hacienda de los Ajuñtas, a village of some five hundred souls, near which the army encamped.

**Friday, 30th.**—Marched fourteen miles, and encamped near Estancia de Arriba, a small hamlet of some twenty houses. Passed several ranchos, and a good deal of corn and cotton. The road continues near the Monclova to near Estancia, where it makes a bend to the east about a mile or two from the road, which it meets again at Monclova.

The vicinity of the road, where not in cultivation, is covered with bushes, cacti, &c. General course from "Los Hermanas" to Monclova S.  $20^{\circ}$  W.

**Saturday, 31st, and November 1 and 2.**—In camp.

**Tuesday, November 3.**—Marched to Monclova, four miles, all the way through cultivated fields, and encamped on the east side of the river, opposite to the Alameda.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

L. SITGREAVES,

1st Lieut. Topographical Engineers.

To Captain GEORGE W. HUGHES,

Chief Topographical Engineers,

Centre Division, Army of Mexico.

The main army, under the immediate command of General Wood, reached the vicinity of the town of Monclova on the 30th of October, and on the 3d of November the camp was moved to a position opposite the Alameda, on the east side of the river, and close to the town, where it remained, in consequence of the Monterey armistice, until the 23d of November, having in the mean time been joined by the troops left behind to guard the passage of the Rio Grande, and to escort the wagon train. During this long halt the topographical engineers were engaged in making surveys of the surrounding country, and astronomical observations, reconnaissances for long distances from the camp in different directions, drawing maps, and reducing the previous observations.

Advantage was taken of this detention to improve the discipline and drill of the troops, to collect supplies from the surrounding country, and to establish depôts and a hospital in Monclova. The commanding general, looking to the long line of communication with San Antonio and Lavaca, had determined to abandon that line of communication, and to form a new base of operation resting on Monclova, which is the heart and centre of a wide and fertile region, abounding with all necessary supplies. When the army moved, Major Warren, a gallant and efficient officer of the 1st Illinois regiment, with four companies of volunteers, were left behind to guard the magazines and to control the population, which was known to be extremely hostile, and in our approach to the city to have organized a force of 2,500 to oppose us. They were, however, disbanded by Colonel Blanco before our arrival. This same force was afterwards led by Colonel Blanco to the gorges of the mountains in the rear of Saltillo during the battle of Buena Vista, to complete the anticipated victory by the indiscriminate massacre of our men after they had been defeated by Santa Anna.

On the 21st of November, Lieutenant Franklin was sent to Monterey and Saltillo to communicate with General Taylor. He was instructed to reconnoitre the roads over which he passed in going and returning. He rejoined us at the camp of Benedito on the 27th. His report will be found in the appendix.

Monclova, a city of about 8,000 inhabitants, and under the Spanish domination, the capital of the province of Coahuila, is pleasantly situated on the Rio Monclova, a small and beautiful stream of pure water rising about ten miles to the south of the town, near the hamlet of Castana. The city of Monclova is a fine and rather cleanly town. The houses are well built, (the better class of stone,) and the principal church is a very large and imposing structure. There is here also an extensive and once comfortable hospital (now abandoned to the bats) erected by the Spanish government, and large quarters for troops. The introduction of running water through all the streets, and its numerous alamedas, (skirted with long avenues of trees,) and its numerous well irrigated gardens, impart to Monclova, particularly to persons who have recently traversed the dry and uncultivated plains of Coahuila, a most agreeable and charming aspect. It wears, nevertheless, that melancholy appearance of decay and of premature old age so common to Mexican towns.

The Rio Monclova is a tributary to the Salado,\* and its valley is extremely well cultivated for nearly its whole extent, especially in the vicin-

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\* Vide memoirs of a reconnaissance from Monclova to Quatro Ciénegas.

ty of the town, where it expands to a width of five or six miles. Immediately above the city are large reservoirs of water, and extensive water-power, an inconsiderable portion of which is expended on three grist mills. The principal productions of this district are corn, cotton, sugar, beans, and figs—the first greatly predominating; and constituting the staple. Very little wheat is grown, and the larger portion of flour consumed is brought from Cienegas. Although this region is well adapted to manufactures; from its mild climate, its vast water-power, the cheapness of subsistence, common labor, and wool, and the peculiar capability of the surrounding country for the production of cotton, it furnishes nothing but a few domestic fabrics of the simplest character, and but few mechanics of any description, the most skilful of whom are foreigners.

Monclova is not defensible, inasmuch as it is commanded from several sections by high hills, the possession of which by a considerable force would determine the fate of the town.

General Wool having decided to march on Parras, an important strategic point from which he might move either on Chihuahua or Durango, concentrate with General Taylor on either San Luis Potosi or Zacatecas, or, if necessary, unite with General Worth at Saltillo, I was directed to leave the camp (on the right bank of the Monclova river) near the town, and select a position for the army in the vicinity of the small hamlet of Castana. Under this order, on the 23d of November I chose a camp on the Saltillo road, about one mile south of the village, near the headwaters of the river—the Arkansas cavalry and Beall's squadron of 2d dragoons having already occupied adjacent ground.

The distance from Monclova to our new camp was 10 miles, the road good, and confined to a narrow valley between mountain ranges, some of whose jagged peaks rise to the height of nearly 4,000 feet. The formation is volcanic, intersected with *trap dikes*, in which *loadstones* or *natural magnets* are found. There is neither water nor cultivation in this march, and the country is almost destitute of vegetation.

*Castana* is a collection of mean ranchos built of the *adobe* or unburnt brick, the common building material of the country: wood is too scarce, stone too expensive, and bricks cannot be burnt, owing to the calcareous nature of the soil. The adobe takes mortar well, and when plastered with *stucco*, (and there is none better than the Mexican,) will last a very long time, resisting the heaviest rains; but when not so protected, they are washed away in a few years. Nearly all the houses in Coahuila are constructed with flat roofs, and are almost universally one story high. The roofs of the better kind are formed by placing on the walls, which are thick and high, joists about eighteen inches apart, over which are arranged diagonally a covering of shingles, and over all is deposited a thick coating of dirt and cement. The houses have often extensive court yards, in which flowers are planted; and they are provided with large reservoirs, kept full of running water, sometimes spouting into jets high in the air. Fireplaces and chimneys are rarely seen in Mexico.

At Castana the valley opens to a width of nearly eight miles, and is well irrigated and cultivated, its principal productions being corn and cattle. All the land in this district of country belongs to a few wealthy proprietors; and nearly the whole laboring population are *serfs*, called *peons*, (slaves sold for debt,) who are transferred with the estates like so many "villens of the glebe." No portion of northern Mexico can be cultivated



except where running-water is at command for purposes of irrigation, that the arable land is very limited in proportion to that which may be regarded as absolutely sterile.

Taking Monclova as a centre, the district described by a radius of twenty miles probably produces annually about three hundred thousand bushels of maize, a good deal of sugar and cotton, and large herds of cattle, sheep, and goats, for the rearing of which two latter classes of animals the whole country would be admirably adapted but for the ravages of the Indians, who render even the suburbs of the towns unsafe.

From Castana there is a mule-track to Cinegas, through the mountain passes, by the way of Pozuelos, mentioned in another memoir.

On the 24th, the whole army encamped on the ground which had been previously selected for that purpose. It was well supplied with those essentials to an army—abundance of good water, grass, and fuel; which latter article was soon wanted, as a *severe norther* set in soon after the tents had been pitched. The weather changed suddenly from extreme heat to a temperature below the freezing point, and the wind blew a perfect gale, covering the camp with a cloud of dust, through which it was almost impossible to distinguish a single object. The whole surface of the soil appeared to be in motion; and it was, indeed, but one heap of sand, there having been no rain for nearly four months. Early in the morning of the 23d the thermometer stood at 24° Fahrenheit, and before 4 o'clock of the same day rose to 95°. This statement will convey a pretty good idea of the vicissitudes of this changeful climate.

I left the camp at Castana before 6 a. m. on the morning of the 25th, in advance of the army, which soon followed. It consisted of one squadron of 1st dragoons, one squadron of 2d dragoons, one battery of eight guns, field artillery, the Arkansas regiment of mounted men, a battalion of 6th infantry, including one company of Kentucky volunteers, and the 1st and 2d Illinois volunteers—a detachment of one squadron of Arkansas and four companies of Illinois volunteers having been left as a garrison at Monclova. The command numbered about two thousand healthy and able-bodied men, inured to the climate, and familiar with privation, well appointed, and anxious to meet the enemy.

It may be proper here to remark; (for the purpose of avoiding repetitions) that in addition to my other duties, I was charged with the service of selecting and laying out encampments, and of assigning the troops to their ground. It therefore became necessary for me to precede the advance-guard of the army in every march, by several hours. On the evening of the 25th, the army encamped at a reservoir called *Bajan*, having marched twenty miles. We here found good water, plenty of fuel, and tolerable grazing. The road was good, passing over a wild and uncultivated country, with high mountains on either side. Our course was southwesterly. As we approached Bajan the ground became *marly*, the dust from which was very distressing to the men, who presented the appearance of having been sprinkled with dirty flour. As far as Bajan the roads to Monterey and Saltillo are common, but at this point they diverge. At Bajan is a large stone reservoir, filled with sweet water from a copious spring, and was formerly supplied with large stone troughs, for the accommodation of the muleteers; now in ruins.

On the 26th, the camp was broken up before day-light, the army following the Saltillo road, which generally passes over an uncultivated and

uninviting country, similar to that of yesterday's march. The men still complain of the effects of the calcareous marl, which injures their feet and eyes. We encamped at *La Joya*, or *Agua Nueva*, a fine large spring, where we also found a sufficiency of wood and grazing; the weather was excessively hot. The direction of our march to-day was WSW.—distance seven miles.

On the 27th we reached the *Venadito*, and encamped on one of its numerous branches, after a most fatiguing march of thirty miles over a dusty road, and exposed to the intolerable heat of the sun. For the whole of this distance there is not a single drop of water, except a little in the Tanque San Fillipe, which was so putrescent that even the mules refused it. The infantry suffered greatly in this march, and came up in small squads. At the Tanque, about fifteen miles from the last camp, we left the main road, and changed our course more to the west, through an easy mountain pass. We were now fairly on the road to Parras.

The *Venadito* is a small stream rising near Patos, (see the map,) falls into the San Juan,\* which, flowing past Monterey, discharges into the Rio Grande at Camargo.

There are several plantations near our camp, on which large quantities of maize are grown. The country also produces numerous herds of goats and cattle.

Between Castana and the Benedito, a distance of 66 miles, there is no settlement; we saw a few ruined ranchos, which had been destroyed by the Indians.

*November 28.*—Owing to the sufferings yesterday of the men and beasts, the general determined to remain on the *Venedito*, where we are comfortably encamped, with an abundant supply of water, fuel, forage, and grass.

It was observed quite early in the day that the stream was rapidly and mysteriously diminishing, and by noon there was scarcely any of it remaining. The General directed me to ascertain, if possible, the cause of this sudden disappearance. After consulting with several Mexicans at the hacienda, who all protested that they knew nothing about the matter, and suggested that the water had probably been drawn off, some 16 miles up the river, for the purpose of irrigating the wheat-fields, I proceeded up the stream about 2½ miles, when I discovered that the supply branch on which we were encamped had been dammed up; and a breach cut by which the water was diverted into another channel. I immediately destroyed the temporary dam, partially stopped the breach, and turned the stream back into its former bed, and then directed a gang of peons to complete the work; a guard was afterwards posted to prevent a recurrence of the mischief. There can be no doubt, judging from all the circumstances of the case, that the act was done with a malicious design.

About four miles south of Bajan, a road diverges from the main road, and again unites with it near the hacienda of Benedito, passing through the "Boca de los Treize Rios," and is about 15 miles shorter than our line of march, but is represented to be very rough and rocky.

*November 29.*—Left Benedito at daybreak, and marched to *Sanceda*,

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\* The drainage of the San Juan is very extensive; and its sources being high up in the Sierra Madre, the downfall-water is discharged into it from the mountain sheds with great rapidity, in consequence of which it often overflows its banks near the Rio Grande, inundating the town of Camargo in the rainy season. The country from Bajan, twenty miles beyond Parras, from Castanuela, Patos, and Agua Nueva, drains into the San Juan.

a distance of 16 miles. After leaving the hacienda Venedito (two miles beyond our camp) the country is poor, barren, and sandy, till we reach the hacienda of Sanceda, on the right bank of the river, which here takes the name of "Rio los Angeles," where the valley is broad, rich, and well cultivated, abounding in corn, cotton, and cattle. We encamped on the left bank of the stream near the intersection of the Parras road and a byway to the hacienda near the mountain of "Los Angeles," between which and our camp there is a road from Monterey to Chihuahua. Our course to-day was south and southwest, the road being bounded on both sides by high mountains.

*November 30.*—Broke up our camp before sunrise; the general direction of the route was south  $28^{\circ}$  west. A march of six miles brought us to the forks of the road; the one leading to *San Antonio de Jarrol*, the other to *Tulia*, which is said to be the better one, but having an uncertain supply of water, in consequence of which we selected the *San Antonio* road. For some distance this route is a mere mule track, exhibiting no signs of having been recently traversed with wagons; it was in places very rough, and intersected with arroyos. At a distance of 13 miles we came to the hacienda *Jarrol*, and three miles further brought us to *San Antonio de Jarrol*, both situated on the same stream with our two preceding encampments; it is here called the "Arroyo de San Antonio." We again encamped on the same stream, after a march of 16 miles.

The hacienda *San Antonio de Jarrol* is a very large corn plantation, which also produces some cotton and cattle. The *Venedito* valley is long, broad, fertile, and highly cultivated, but the road was confined to the high and arid country, covered with a growth of cacti,—of which there is an infinite variety, many of them of great beauty—*artemesia*, *equiseta*, the *sortal* (from the large bulbous root of which an intoxicating liquor is distilled,) the *maguey* or *agave Americana*, from which the *pulque* and *muscal* (favorite Mexican drinks) are obtained; the *Spanish bayonet*, which is a large tree often twenty-eight feet high and three feet in diameter; the *yucca alvifolia* and the *lecheugillo*, a kind of dwarf bayonet, growing about eighteen inches high, and its leaves dentated like the *sortal* or saw-grass, and their extremities pointed like the *Spanish bayonet*. This plant furnishes the raw material for the mats, ropes, and gunny bags of the country. It is prepared by rotting, which destroys all of the leaf but the fibre, which is extremely strong.

The hacienda *Florida* is within sight, some eight miles off. To *Patos* is eighteen miles. The march to-day was nearly due south, but at this point the road turns nearly due west.

*December 1.*—Left camp at daybreak with the headquarters; but was soon sent ahead to look for an encampment, which we found at *La Pastora*, an "estancia" or cattle rancho, supplied with good water from a well about twenty feet deep within its enclosure. The camp was pitched about a mile from the estancia, partly on a running stream and partly on a reservoir, into which the water of the stream was collected for the use of cattle. The grazing was indifferent and fuel scant. The laborers here are exclusively devoted to the growth of wheat. The road from *Tulio* comes in at this point, passing through our camp. We marched to-day sixteen miles, over a dry and uncultivated country similar to that passed over yesterday, which may in fact be said of every day's march.

\*The word *labore*, in Mexico, means either a definite measure of land or a cultivated field.

The fuel generally consists of a small growth of *musquette*, of *huasaché*, (a true acacia,) and a species of *pseudo acacia*. On our march from Monclova we have occasionally seen the black-tailed deer; a large kind of hare, (the same I believe as that described by Townsend;) the prairie wolf, and a large black or dark-colored wolf; the American mocking bird, the paisano (described by Major McCall,) the quail (of the U. S.,) and a beautiful tufted dove-colored partridge. The cattle are of the same character as those mentioned in the memoir on San Antonio de Bexar; they make excellent draught oxen and good bees. They have also an excellent breed of hogs in northern Mexico, which attain an immense size; they fatten easily, and their meat is remarkably sweet and nutritious. I think they resemble the China hog; their color is commonly a darkish blue.

December 2.—The march to-day was only eight miles, and the camp was pitched on both banks of the *Rio Tenago*, a beautiful full stream flowing rapidly over a pebbly bottom, after bursting its way through a rocky ledge, over which it falls in numerous cascades. It rises near Castanetala, where its waters are of a deep red, but the coloring matter is all deposited before reaching this place, and they become perfectly pelucid. At this point a small portion of the stream is drawn off to La Pastora, and the remainder is all absorbed by the labores.

In the rainy season it flows into the Venadito, (called also the San Antonio and the Los Angeles,) a tributary to the San Juan, the deep, dry bed of which we crossed on the 30th of November, about six miles south of Sanceda. When full it would be impassable for an army without bridging or boats.

At Tenago we found mournful evidence of the insecurity of life and property in this unhappy and distracted country. A few ruined ranchos showed that there had once been a settlement in this beautiful and secluded valley; but a few years since, as we were informed by a Mexican, a band of Camanches made a descent on its peaceful and unoffending inhabitants, and slaughtered 120 in one single building, where they had huddled together like a flock of sheep scared by hungry and ferocious wolves. There is scarcely a mile of our march through Mexico that is not marked by the wooden cross and a pile of stones—sad memento, that on that spot some poor creature had met his fate at the hands of ruthless savages, or of his own countrymen, quite as merciless as the dreaded Camanches. On more than one occasion, when our small advance had been mistaken, in the distance, for a party of Indians—for such was the rapidity and silence of our progress that our presence was often a surprise—it was touching to see the women flee to the place where, perhaps, a father, a mother, or a husband had perished, and, clasping the cross in their arms, quietly await that martyrdom which sad experience had taught them to regard as inevitable.

On the 3d of December the army arrived early, after a march of twenty miles, at *Cienega Grande*, and encamped—Bonneville's battalion, the advance, having started at 2 o'clock in the morning to avoid the excessive heat of the sun. The road was very rough and difficult for wagons and artillery.

*Cienega Grande* is situated on the main road from the Rio Grande, via Camargo, Monterey, Saltillo, and Parras, to Chihuahua and Durango. It is a large and valuable estate, producing wheat, corn, cotton, horses and cattle; which has been reclaimed, as its name (*Big Marsh*) implies, from an extensive swamp or shallow lake.

The next day we marched eighteen miles and encamped in low ground,

with good water and grass convenient, near the hacienda of San Lore de Obaja. This is the most magnificent and lordly establishment we have yet seen. It is picturesquely situated on a lovely stream of water, surrounded by its alamedas or pleasure grounds, through which the water has been diverted, with long avenues of trees leading up to it from different directions. It is quadrangular in shape, about 500 feet by 300 feet deep, divided by a cross building into two large courts. The exterior aspect is very imposing, with its white surface and turrets on each angle, loop-holed for defence, which lend to it quite a castellated appearance. Its interior arrangements and decorations are very rich, in keeping with the exterior. The floors are formed of cement brought to a perfectly smooth surface, polished and colored, and the walls are painted in fresco. The population of this hacienda, including the surrounding hotises, is about 800, the most of whom are peons. The intelligent and hospitable proprietors of this vast establishment were educated at Bardstown, Kentucky, and appear to entertain most lively and agreeable recollections of the country in which they passed their boyish days. They have important machinery from the United States for their mills, cotton gins, and prizes; and in no part of the world have I seen better farming arrangements—everything is convenient, sightly, comfortable, and efficient. This estate is of immense extent, but of course much of it is not arable, and is valuable only for the rearing of stock. The cultivated land is devoted to the growth of corn, wheat, cotton, and fruits, and to the production of wine and brandy from the grape, and is justly regarded as one of the most celebrated vineyards in Mexico. The wines are of three kinds—the *carlone*, the *vino blanco*, and the *dulce*: the first is a kind of *claret Burgundy*, very delicate and palatable; the second is a species of *Malaga Madeira*; and the third resembles the *muscadell*. They are all pure juice of the grape, and the better kinds, which, when old, give an agreeable aroma, are formed from the natural expression of juice without the application of artificial force. The ordinary kinds are trodden out by naked men in vats. The brandy, “*aqua de vide*,” resulting from the distillation of the wine, is also a very pure liquor; and if the art of rectification or separating the essential oils was well understood, would no doubt rival the best French brandies. This region of country, the soil of which appears to be calcareous, intermixed with the debris of the slates, may truly be called the land of “corn, of the olive, and the vine.” Its climate is salubrious, mild, and equable, and is exempt from the visitation of the northers; and is by far the most agreeable and attractive portion of Mexico that we have as yet seen. I regret that my short and interrupted visit to it did not permit me to institute those minute statistical, geographical, and economical researches which I had proposed to myself; but the commanding general will readily understand the reasons to which I allude. Corn sells for \$2 50 the fanega, (not quite three bushels;) flour \$9 the cargo, (of 300 pounds;) beef four cents the pound; wine \$1 the gallon, and brandy seventy-five cents.

The Messrs. Yvarras have attempted, but without success, to substitute our agricultural implements for the crude and primitive implements in use. The peons cannot or will not employ them, and, with their characteristic tenacity and aversion to change of habits, obstinately adhere to the rude cart, whose clumsy wheels are formed of segments of hard wood fastened together with trenails and bound with thongs of cow-hide, to which the oxen are harnessed, drawing by the horns; and a plough made



of a hooked piece of wood, iron pointed, which simply scratches over the surface of the ground.

From San Lorenzo to Parras is about five miles. On the 5th December we occupied a position half way between the hacienda and the town. The camp was pitched on a charming plain, watered by numerous springs, facing the town, with the high and magnificent peaks of the Sierra Madre towering in our front, at the very base of which, and occupying the first declivity of its slopes, is built the lovely town of Parras—a collection of haciendas, perhaps it may be termed, rather than a city, for the vineyards and gardens separate the houses from each other, except on the principal streets. The water, gathered from the recesses of the mountains, and stored on its terraces in large stone reservoirs, is, after irrigating the vineyards, permitted to descend in cascades and numerous brooks to the lower town, all of whose streets it washes.

Parras and its dependencies are said to contain a population of fifteen thousand souls, but I regard this as an exaggerated estimate. Its inhabitants are industrious, sober, thrifty, intelligent, and unfriendly to the present form of their government. From them we experienced nothing but kindness and hospitality. The great mass of the people, including the better class, uniformly exhibited towards us the most amiable deportment, and carefully guarded and attended on our sick, who were necessarily left behind when the army left, protected only by a single company, which was ordered off in a few days afterward. Our camp was constantly crowded with the beauty and fashion of the town, who visited the tents of the officers without hesitation or restraint, and the most cordial feelings and intercourse were established between us. This was the pleasant result of the good conduct of the troops, the largest portion of which were volunteers, and shows what may be made of them by a proper course of discipline, stringent but kind. The town, in a military point of view, may be regarded as a large and strong fortress, easily defended against an assault, and capable of sustaining a protracted siege. But for the friendly disposition of the inhabitants, it might have given us some trouble.

*Resumé of distances from Monclova to Parras, Mexico.*

From Monclova to Castaña.....	10 miles.	
“ Castaña to Bajan.....	20 “	
“ Bajan to La Joya.....	14 “	(Agua Nueva.)
“ La Joya to Venadito.....	32 “	
“ Venadito to Saucedá.....	22 “	
“ Saucedá to San Antonio.....	16 “	(De Jarral.)
“ San Antonio to La Pastora.....	16 “	
“ La Pastora to Tenajo.....	8 “	
“ Tenajo to Cienega Grande.....	20 “	
“ Cienega Grande to San Lorenzo....	18 “	(De Abajó.)
“ San Lorenzo to Parras.....	5 “	

Total.....181 miles in eleven marches.

The division of the army under the command of General Wool has thus marched, taking La Vaca as the starting point, more than seven

hundred miles, transporting its supplies, medical stores, and munitions of war, with a celerity and success almost unexampled in the history of modern warfare; and the day after its arrival at Parras, it was, *in every respect*, in a condition to have resumed its line of march for an equal or still greater distance.\*

Although it may seem foreign to the subject of my duties, I cannot refrain in this connexion from paying what I believe to be a well-merited tribute of respect to our quartermaster's and commissary's departments. Certainly no army in the field was ever better served, the evidence of which is seen in what I have just written. I may also, I trust, be permitted here to say, in the last official communication which I may address to you,† that in the discharge of my arduous and multifarious duties I have experienced from the commanding general nothing but kindness and liberality. Almost every suggestion, in the line of my duty, which I had the honor to make to him, was promptly met, and every possible facility extended for its successful execution. And besides this, I may venture to add that I was a daily witness of the zeal with which he exerted himself for the comfort of his army and the service of his country. It may not be inappropriate here to remark that all the inhabitants on our line of march remained quietly at their homes, in the undisturbed possession of their property: not a house, that I am aware of, was deserted, nor was there an outrage, to my knowledge, perpetrated on any of the people. Everything that was procured from the country, either for the use of the army or for the individual use of officers, was most liberally paid for, and persons and property on all occasions respected.

As I was absent on a reconnaissance towards Durango‡ when the army suddenly moved on Saltillo, I must refer to Lieutenant Sitgreaves, topographical engineers, for a descriptive memoir of that march. I rejoined headquarters at San Juan de la Vaqueria on the third day after the army left Parras, having found my way through the mountain passes.§

In closing this communication, there are many reflections in relation to the social, religious, commercial, and political conditions of the Mexican people, the government, and the character of the country we have recently traversed, which naturally force themselves on the mind; but want of present leisure prevents me from giving expression to them now. I write hurriedly, on board of a steamboat, with scarcely time to read what I have written, and I have therefore done but little more than to give you an almost literal transcript of my journal.

\* The 6th infantry, 1st dragoons, artillery, and Arkansas cavalry, taking their respective points of departure, had marched, up to Parras, nearly two thousand miles.

† Captain Hughes at this time had been detached, and ordered to proceed with General Worth to Vera Cruz.

‡ See memoir in relation to this exploration.

§ I struck the main road to Saltillo at Castañuela; but such had been the admirable manner in which the division had moved, that until I approached within three miles of the infantry camp under Colonel Churchill, there was no sign of troops having marched in that direction, with the exception of the camping grounds—not a broken wagon, or a dead animal, or a straggler was to be seen; and yet the infantry averaged for two days nearly forty miles a day.

MOUTH OF THE RIO GRANDE,  
February 1, 1847.

SIR: Being detained at this place for the want of transports to convey us to our destination, I do not know that I can better employ my time than by attempting to supply, to some extent, the omissions and deficiencies of my previous memoir; but whether I shall accomplish it or not will depend on circumstances over which I can exercise no control.

It seems to me clearly the policy of the government to establish a line of military posts on "Wool's road," from San Antonio de Bexar to the ford on the Rio Grande, near Presidio, for the purpose of extending protection to the settlers and traders against robbers and the predatory Indian tribes. To carry out this plan effectually would require a regiment of mounted men, with its headquarters at San Antonio de Bexar, a post on the Quihi; another on the Leona, and the third on the Rio Grande, at the ford. These posts, with the exception of the one on the Rio Grande, might be withdrawn in a few years, as there can be no question that the protection which they would afford would be the means of rapidly settling the country with a population that would soon be able to defend itself. Beside this consideration, it must be obvious to even the most superficial observer that hostilities with the Comanches and Lipans, the most warlike of the native tribes, are neither remote nor contingent. I regard it as inevitable, and believe that we shall never establish cordial relations with them until they have been severely punished—an affair, by-the-by, not easy of accomplishment. A defeat in a contest with the United States would result in their precipitation upon the northern provinces of Mexico, which they would assuredly desolate—a consequence which we may deplore, but cannot avert.

A reference to my memoir, and accompanying maps, in relation to the march of General Wool's army from San Antonio to Santa Rosa, will show how well Western Texas is watered, and may convey some faint idea of the richness and beauty of the country embraced between the Rio San Antonio and the Nueces; beyond which latter river, until we approach the Rio Grande, it would be no great exaggeration to say that "t'is all barren." It is true that there are occasional narrow strips of rich land, but for the whole of that distance (64 miles) we crossed but one stream of running water.

All the rivers between San Antonio and the Nueces may be characterized as beautiful and noble streams of clear and excellent water, and many of them would afford an almost unlimited amount of water power; I particularly refer to the San Antonio, the Medina, the Quihi, (perhaps below the settlement,) and the Leona, (nearly equal to the San Antonio.) The others are objectionable on account of their periodical floods. I know of no country better adapted to manufactures than western Texas, and there is perhaps no region of the world where wool can be grown at so low a rate, or where the necessaries of life may be produced so cheaply. The heat of the climate, it might be supposed, would deteriorate the quality of the fleece; but such I am told is not the case. The soil is calcareous, with small angular fragments of flinty pebbles scattered over it, the drift from the mountains deposited by a current flowing from south to north, the traces of which we saw at almost every step from the Guadalupe up to San Antonio; and no doubt they may be found beyond it, leading to their mountain sources. The country may be described as a rolling



prairie, pretty well wooded, and, after leaving the Medina, eminently beautiful and picturesque, covered at most seasons of the year with a luxuriant growth of grass, and abounding with game. At almost every rod we started up herds of deer, and flocks of partridges and wild turkeys. The reverse of the picture is, that it abounds with venomous reptiles, snakes, scorpions, centipedes; and tarantulas. The latter are much dreaded, and regarded with more horror than any of the tribe. They are provided with fangs nearly as large as those of the rattlesnake, while they possess none of his magnanimity, or rather indolence of habit. The principal annoyances to travellers consist of innumerable crowds of *ticks* and *red bugs*, who fasten and prey upon him with instinctive avidity.

It is melancholy, in traversing this rich and beautiful country, so eminently fitted for the support of human life, to find it but one vast solitude, undisturbed save by some wary traveller or trader, who pursues his stealthy course at night, with the hope (often vain) of eluding the crafty savage, who looks out from his mountain home like an eagle from its eyrie, watching for his victim. But it requires only a slight effort of the imagination to fancy it peopled with an industrious and teeming population; its heights crowned with human habitations, its fertile valleys in cultivation, and its plains covered with bleating flocks and lowing herds. It remains but for the government to *will it*, and this picture will be realized. It involves simply the establishment of the line of posts which I have indicated to produce these beneficent results; for the natural advantages of the country could not fail to attract the attention of foreign immigrants, and of our own roving and adventurous countrymen.

The formation of the country is calcareous; the rocks, after rising, near the rivers, in high bluffs and isolated hills, intersected by *trap dikes*. This we particularly noticed on the Rio Frio. Near the Leona\* I observed numerous small holes in the rocks, about one foot in diameter, and perfectly smooth and circular in shape. They were probably formed by the action of water. The country beyond the Rio Grande, between it and the Sabinos, is similar to that already described, but is neither so well wooded nor watered: it is nevertheless well calculated for the rearing of stock, for where the natural flow of water is deficient it may be supplied by wells; and there are large quantities of arable land abandoned for the want of labor, and in consequence of the insecurity of life and property. As we approach Santa Rosa, some ten miles beyond the Sabinos, a change is observed in the geological formation, and we are obviously entering upon a country of igneous origin. The rocks first seen are conglomerate, composed of angular fragmentary limestone, united with a calcareous cement; the whole being probably due to watery discharges from the now extinct volcanic craters.

At Santa Rosa we reach for the first time the *Sierra Gorda*—a subordinate chain of the great “Sierra Madre,” or Mother Mountain. This range seems to be a continuation of that through which the Rio Grande bursts its way at the cañon below the mouth of the Rio Cinchos, and which, sweeping in a curvilinear direction northeasterly, passing to the west of Santa Rosa, Monclova, Monterey, and Victoria, terminates near

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\* I can scarcely allow myself to speak of the beautiful river, and its rich and lovely valley, for the language of truth, when applied to it, must necessarily assume the appearance of fiction.

the mouth of Limon river, between Tampico and Vera Cruz, on the Gulf of Mexico. At Las Hermanas an inferior range diverges from it in the direction of Candela, and again unites with it near Monterey. It is very difficult, and indeed almost impossible, at present, accurately to define this great mountain chain;\* but when our *ensemble* maps are compiled, we may be able to do so with considerable precision. We skirted its entire base from Santa Rosa to Monclova, at which point our examinations gave us a transverse line of more than one hundred miles through the mountain passes; and we actually crossed it in our march to Parras. Besides this, we have two lines of reconnaissance from Monclova to Monterey, one from Monterey to Saltillo, two from Saltillo to our line of march from Monclova to Parras, two between Parras and Saltillo, and two from Parras to Alamo de Parras. These, in addition to the explorations of topographical engineers with General Taylor's army, of the Rio Grande from its mouth to Camargo, and then to Monterey, from Monterey to Victoria, and thence to Tampico, and perhaps from Matamoras to Victoria, with General Patterson's command, will give us the means of satisfactorily determining the principal geographical features of northern Mexico. I also understand that examinations have recently been made of the Rio Grande from Camargo to a point some thirty miles above Presidio, which encourage the hope that this noble river may become navigable, with slight improvements, at certain seasons of the year, nearly as high up as the Conchos, and render it not improbable that steamboats may at no distant day ascend even to Chihuahua, to Paso del Norte, and to the vicinity of Santa Fe. This, however, is venturing on the field of speculation. The mountain at Santa Rosa is one unbroken chain for many leagues in extent, without one single pass or defile leading over it. The highest peaks rise to an altitude of nearly four thousand feet above the level of the plain, and it must at one time have been covered by the sea, and subsequently been elevated by some internal force. Dr. Long, an intelligent American, who has resided many years in this country, and has pretty thoroughly explored the mountains, informed me that he had found marine shells on the highest points. I regret that my engagements prevented me from examining any considerable portion of this interesting region. Along the base of the mountain, and rising directly from it, may be seen a range of conical hills about five hundred feet high, of a nearly uniform shape and size. It is in these hills that the silver lodes mentioned in a previous memoir are found. Running out nearly perpendicularly from the main range are a series of tabular hills, varying from one hundred to three hundred feet in elevation, presenting to the eye the appearance of a perfect level on the top, with regular sides and truncated extremities. They are constituted generally of basaltic rocks, and are covered with a luxuriant growth of grass; but some less regular in figure are composed of lavas and volcanic ashes. We lose sight of these peculiarities near Hermanas, and the mountains assume the form of vast buttresses separated by narrow defiles, leading high up into and often through them—such as are described in the memoir.

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\* The published maps of this portion of Mexico are absolutely worse than useless; and we were compelled to guess our way, step by step, as we could obtain no reliable information except by personal observation. Arista's manuscript map (captured at Resaca de la Palma) is tolerably accurate; but we did not obtain a sight of it till after our arrival at Saltillo.

Beyond Monclova the mountains are composed of a mass of whitely altered limestone, showing the action of heat upon it under pressure. The same formation was observed at Monterey and Saltillo. Where the mountain sides have been abraded by the rains, they exhibit the appearance of white stripes from top to bottom. I regret that it is not in my power to communicate more satisfactory information in relation to the geology of this unexplored and almost unknown country; but my official duties greatly interfere with such researches.

The finest agricultural region in Coahuila is in the vicinity of Santa Rosa; but owing to the want of laborers, and to the depredations of the Indians, a very large proportion of the arable land is left uncultivated, and for the same reason the rich silver mines—the most valuable, probably, in Mexico—abandoned. While much of the surface of this State is sterile, and large quantities of it unfit for cultivation, owing to the want of water for purposes of irrigation, (for, in consequence of the long droughts, no land can be tilled without it,) there are extensive tracts of arable soil still in its primitive and virgin condition, which, under a better and more paternal government—one capable and willing to protect life and property—might be rendered highly productive, for in few parts of the world does nature more liberally reward labor judiciously applied.

Nothing can be imagined, in a country pretending to be civilized, so inefficient, despotic, capricious, and oppressive as the government of the (so called) Mexican republic. It matters not who is in power, the result is the same. It not only extends no protection to its citizens, but it absolutely forbids them the use of arms for their own defence, and deprives them of them by unceremonious domiciliary visits; they are forbidden to possess them without a special license; exactions are imposed on them in every form that human ingenuity can invent; and, in one word, the government is known only by its malign influence, and felt only by its oppression. When the inhabitants of Alamo de Parras invoked the interposition, against the depredations of the Indians, of General Ruez, who commanded a large force at San Miguel, he returned them the pious answer, that "he hoped God would protect and bless them, but that he could not move from San Miguel"—a benediction (which if not a cold-blooded mockery) more becoming a bishop than a soldier. It is a fact that the only security which the people of Coahuila had felt for many months was after our arrival, and in the presence of our troops; and it was only during our march and occupation of the country that they could venture to travel a few miles from their own homes with the assurance that the next chaparral did not conceal the lurking savage or the merciless bandit—both alike seeking his life and property.

The system of *peonage*, or domestic slavery, keeps in bondage at least *four-fifths* of northern Mexico. No system of slavery can be more harsh and degrading, for it carries with it none of those kindly sympathies and early associations which so often alleviate it in the United States. Peons are persons sold for debt, and it rarely happens that one is ever redeemed from bondage till old age renders him useless to his owner, who then charitably permits him to beg for the remnant of his life. The only appearance of liberty which he enjoys, is that of selecting a master who may choose to buy him from his owner by paying the claim against him, which, when tendered, (with the consent of the slave,) he is compelled by law to accept as a discharge of the obligation. The poor peon lives in a

miserable mud hovel or reed hut, (sometimes built of cornstalks, thatched with grass.) He is allowed a peck of corn a week for his subsistence, and a small monthly pay for his clothes; but as all his purchases are made from his master, each year generally finds him still deeper in debt, for the payment of which he at last pledges all he possesses—*his children!* and they are bound for the parent till they are legally capable of incurring debts of their own, and become eligible to a state of slavery on their own account. And yet Mexico calls herself a free country!

The State of Coahuila is bounded on the east by Tamaulipas and the Rio Grande, on the north by the Rio Grande and Chihuahua, on the west by Chihuahua, and on the south by Chihuahua, Durango, and New Leon. It contains about 193,000 square miles, with a population of only 125,000, or not quite one and a half to the square mile. Two-thirds of its surface is a level plain, and the remainder consists of mountains and ~~arm~~, fertile valleys. Its principal rivers are the Rio Grande, the Alamo, the Sabinos, the Salado, and the San Juan, of which the first is alone navigable for any considerable distance. Its chief towns are Santa Rosa, Monclova, Parras, and Saltillo—the latter being the seat of government. It is situated in latitude  $25^{\circ} 25' 30''$  north, and longitude  $101^{\circ} 1' 45''$  west of Greenwich, on one of the numerous tributaries to the San Juan. It contains about 11,000 inhabitants, is a cleanly, well-built, well-paved, and well-watered town, and is the ecclesiastical as well as political capital. The cathedral, facing the main plaza, is a large and imposing stone structure, of a mixed order of architecture, the Arabesque predominating, with a richly ornate façade of cut stone, *painted* with various colors. The plaza is extensive, and the buildings on it generally two stories high, with balconies or porticoes. I think I can recognise in the domestic architecture of the cities an intimate blending of the Mexican, the Moorish, and the Flemish—the two last having been imported by the Spaniards, and engrafted on the original Aztec style. Directly fronting the cathedral is a beautiful and copious fountain, at which the female peons, in their picturesque costumes, may be seen at all hours of the day drawing water, and chatting with the characteristic volubility of the country; for most Mexicans, unlike the Spaniards, are inveterate talkers. Saltillo is a place of considerable trade, and is the seat of the only manufactories of which Coahuila can boast. These establishments are represented to be in a very flourishing condition, paying high wages to the employes, and large dividends to the stockholders. The city is not defensible, being situated in a valley which is commanded on three sides. The true battle field for its defence in front is just beyond the hacienda of San Juan de Buena Vista, about four miles beyond the town. On this approach is a narrow defile occupied by the road, on the right hand of which rises a high bluff hill, and on the left is a wide, deep, and almost impassable arroyo. This pass may be completely swept by a converging fire of artillery, and can be turned only by light infantry on the one hand, while on the other side of the ravine, (in which is a running stream of water,) no troops can pass without exposing their flank to the artillery within point blank range. To occupy the whole valley would demand about 4,000 men of all arms, with powerful batteries of field artillery, and it would probably require some 1,500 more to hold the town, protect the depôts and guard the passes. These forces could defend Saltillo in that direction from overwhelming numbers and superior guns. The true position for the defence of the

city in the rear, from the direction of Monterey, is at *Los Muertos*, thirty miles distant, one of the strongest mountain gorges I have ever seen. It is in fact the portal to the whole interior country. The Mexicans seem to have contemplated making a stand at this place after the termination of the armistice, and had half constructed several strong works which were calculated to command all the approaches within the reach of their guns. Why they should have abandoned this apparently impregnable post is still "a marvel and a mystery," unless we may venture to suppose that the known presence of a large column at Monclova, which might have taken them in reverse, impressed them with the idea that the forward movement of that division would render their position untenable, and jeopard the safety of their army.

More than half of the whole State of Coahuila belongs to the two brothers *Sanchez*, who also own some thirty thousand peons. Several of their vast estates are managed by stewards, while the remainder are rented. Their principal town residence is in Saltillo, but their favorite country seat is the magnificent hacienda of Pátos. This powerful family, together with their relations, the Blancos, the Yvarros, and the Zualagos, own nearly the entire State and *its population*. They have taken no open or active part in the present war, and have preserved friendly and even kindly relations with many of our officers; but the Blancos and Sanchezes are understood to be prepared, under more promising circumstances, to uphold the Mexican government with their wealth and influence.\* Nearly all our expenditures for supplies have found their way directly or indirectly into the coffers of these princely nabobs.

Except for the education of the clergy, there are no seminaries of learning deserving of the name in Coahuila; but there is an ecclesiastical college in Saltillo of some reputation, but the course of instruction sedulously excludes everything approaching to science, and is confined to the classics and to the reading of the Fathers. The consequence of this state of things is, that by far the greater portion of the population are plunged into the most profound ignorance, and can neither read nor write. Many of the better class were formerly sent to the United States to be educated, but for some years this plan has been abandoned, and they are now sent for that purpose to France and to the city of Mexico.

Four-fifths of the population of northern Mexico are of the aboriginal race, (pure, or mixed in different degrees with Spanish blood,) the lineal descendants of the once powerful Aztec monarchy. In habits, costumes, mode of life, wants, and civilization, they have probably changed but little, with the exception of the abandonment of their barbarous sacrificial rites, since the conquest, and they retain even much of their original language. They are a good-looking people, and while one seldom sees a very large man amongst them, they are certainly a well-made, agile, and muscular race, (which we have been in the custom of underrating) of abstemious habits, and of great powers of endurance, on foot or on horseback. They are scarcely equalled as couriers, and are unsurpassed in marching. It may seem a paradox to say that they possess much *bold-*

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\* This they have since done. One of the Sanchezes was with Miñon at the capture of Major Gaines, at Encarnacion, and gave him information of that movement. Colonel Blanco raised a large Mexican force of *rancheros*, and threw himself in the rear of Saltillo to cut off our retreat.



ness and little *courage*; they would venture where other men would hesitate, and yet would offer but faint resistance when danger is upon them. Hence it is that they so often fall victims to the Indians.

Fancy to yourself a rather light-colored Indian, dressed in a pair of leather unmentionables, without suspenders, buttoning from the knee downwards, which are usually left open in warm weather for comfort, and to exhibit the white drawers underneath; a common cotton shirt, often wanting; a red sash tied tightly around the waist; a pair of sandals on his feet, and enormous iron spurs on *h  el*; with a heavy conical felt hat (that would almost resist a sabre cut) on head, and a long iron-pointed aspen goad in hand, and you have a perfect picture of the *ranchero*, or rather *vachero*. Mounted on a spirited pony, with a lasso at his saddle-bow, and he is no mean adversary for a single man to encounter. He rides well and fearlessly, and throws the lasso with unerring aim. It is a beautiful sight to see him with his red blanket (worn as a poncho in cold weather) streaming in the wind, his head bent eagerly forward, and lasso whirling in circles high in air, riding down some refractory animal that he seldom fails to catch, at the first throw, by the neck or hind foot, bringing him violently to the ground. The animal thus caught feels that the contest is ended, and quietly submits to his captor. It is amusing to see the young urchins following the example of their elders, and practising on little pigs and tender kids, who by no means appear to enjoy the fun. It verifies the old fable of the "boys and frogs." It may be sport to the one party, but is often death to the other. Every Mexican, whatever his condition may be, is expert with the lasso, and the throwing of it may be regarded as a national amusement. One of our men became intoxicated at the hacienda of Lorenzo, near Parras, and was in the act of raising his carbine to shoot Don Manuel, its amiable and accomplished proprietor, who, quick as thought, threw the noose over him and pinioned him by the arms, when our stalwart Arkansas cavalier became as meek and quiet as a lamb.

The wealthier classes dress very much in the same style, but of richer fabrics, their buttons being usually of silver, and they are particularly ostentatious in their saddles and housings, which are often overloaded with heavy silver ornaments. They are also very curious in the color and patterns of their blankets and the materials of their cloaks.

The women are rather under what we regard as the medium size, slight in figure, well-formed, and graceful; and while few are beautiful, many of them, while young, are good-looking and agreeable; their hands and feet are small, with well turned ankles; they have generally white teeth, good mouths, magnificent black eyes, and glossy black hair, in the dressing of which they daily bestow much pains. They appear to be amiable and kind-hearted, and are said to make good wives and mothers. They are cleanly in their habits; for, most of the towns and haciendas being situated on running streams, they have every advantage for bathing, of which they avail themselves most liberally, without encumbering themselves with much superfluous clothing. Their usual dress consists of thin slippers, without stockings, a cloth petticoat, usually red, and a chemise which exposes more of the person than is in most countries considered to be consistent with a due regard to modesty; but this is the custom of the country, and I am not disposed to criticise it; with a rosary around the neck, and gold ear-rings, and you have the female costume complete.



When they go abroad the reboso is generally worn either over the head, concealing the greater portion of the face, or over the shoulders, like a shawl. It is worn by all Mexican women; its quality depending on the condition of the wearer. To their ordinary domestic duties they add the weaving of rebosos and blankets; the latter are worn by the men as an outer covering, and is literally "a bed by night, a garment all the day." Many of them are of fine texture, and of great beauty of figure and color. Their prices vary from \$3 to \$75, and even to \$100. Many of the better class of females are well-educated and accomplished ladies, who would grace the saloons of the most polished capitals. The town of Mier is celebrated all over the republic for the beauty of its blankets.

Mexican cookery is, to my taste, *detestable*; but many Americans, less fastidious perhaps, affect to like it. Everything is rendered as hot as fire by *red pepper*, which enters in enormous quantities into each dish as an essential ingredient. The favorite dish in Mexico is the frijoles (friholes,) which is universally brought on the table as a *bonne bouche*. It consists of small, brown, black-eyed beans, boiled for six or eight hours in soft water, and then mixed with melted lard and salt. It is, when thus cooked, a very agreeable vegetable. Another article of food, and almost as great a favorite, is the tortilla. It is prepared by boiling maize in a pretty strong ley (of ashes,) which separates the husk. It is afterwards washed in clean cold water till all the impurities are removed, and it is then mashed (for I know not how better to express it) on a short stone table, placed in an inclined position, with a stone *rolling-pin*, till it is ground into a soft, plastic paste. A woman then, wetting her hands, (it is to be hoped that they have been previously well washed,) takes up a small portion of the dough, and by dexterously shifting it from one hand to the other, patting it at the same time, (and producing a loud noise,) soon brings it to the required consistency, shape, and size. It is then baked on a griddle, and taken hot to the table, where it serves the triple purposes of bread, forks, and spoons. With butter, it would no doubt make a palatable bread; but in Mexico no butter can be found, except in the houses of foreigners. It is even extremely difficult to procure *cow's* milk, notwithstanding their numerous herds, and goat's milk is generally used; but that cannot be always obtained, and is not fit for use till it has been boiled. We succeeded occasionally in obtaining *curds* at some of the haciendas. In no portion of the world have I seen better wheat bread, cakes, or confectionary. The Mexicans are peculiarly skilful in the preparation of fruits and confectionary.

The wealthier classes live in a style of great luxury, and I have seldom partaken of more elegant and sumptuous entertainments than at their hospitable boards. The services of china and silver are beautiful and rich, while the courses follow each other in rapid succession; and the tables groan with a profusion of meats, fruits, confectionary, and wines, piled upon them. A gentleman, whose curiosity once induced him to count the courses at a dinner, assured me that they exceeded twenty in number.

During my short stay at Saltillo, I had an opportunity of witnessing their burial rites. A young lady of great beauty, whose loss was deeply deplored, had recently died, and an immense concourse of people attended the funeral solemnities. The deceased was dressed in white, with white satin slippers on her feet, her head decked with garlands, her raven locks gracefully disposed over her shoulders, her hands crossed in front, and

holding a large bouquet of flowers: thus adorned, "like a bride awaiting her bridegroom," she was placed on a white couch, also trimmed with flowers, and surmounted with a canopy of satin, roses, and feathers. On this bier the mortal remains of the poor young girl, beautiful even in death, were paraded, feet foremost, through the principal streets of the city, and around the main plaza, exposed to the wandering stare of curious strangers. The procession was headed by three priests, dressed in the rich vestments of their order, chanting prayers for the deceased, the chanting being accompanied by three violins; others carried banners and crosses; incense was burnt; four men in clerical costume bore the bier on their shoulders, and then followed the mourners, friends, and relations of the deceased; the whole being preceded by a band of music, while the bells of the Cathedral tolled mournfully. The ceremonies within the church were not different from those of the Roman Catholic religion in other countries.

The Mexicans have been often represented as a subtle, treacherous, and cruel race, in whom no reliance can be placed with safety. This may be so; but if I should speak of them from personal observation alone, I should say that they are naturally hospitable, kind-hearted, and amiable. In their manners they are extremely courteous, and the most civil people I have ever known. My duties generally carried me in advance of the army—sometimes several days ahead, and often to considerable distances with small escorts. On one occasion, being unwell, I remained over night in a town of 1,400 inhabitants, without a soldier within eight miles of me; and another time, I was fifty miles distant from the camp, with only three dragoons as a guard; and yet at no time did I feel the slightest apprehension for my safety, nor have I any reason to suspect that my confidence was misplaced. Wherever I went, whether to the princely hacienda or the humble rancho, I was treated with kindness and hospitality; and I must confess that the impression made upon me was greatly in their favor. With a better and wiser form of government—one able and willing to destroy their miserable system of *peonage*, to insure the liberty of the press, educate and liberalize the people, and develop the resources of the country—I cannot doubt that they would rise high in the scale of civilization. It is true, that while they possess many of the virtues, they exhibit also many of the vices of an ignorant and half-barbarous people. We have recently often heard of deeds of extreme cruelty perpetrated by them on the Rio Grande; but it remains to be seen how far they were acts of retaliation, provoked (but not justified) by the outrages they have endured. From Saltillo to Mier, with the exception of the large towns, all is a desert, and there is scarcely a solitary house (if there be one) inhabited. The smiling villages which welcomed our troops on their upward march are now black and smouldering ruins, the gardens and orange groves destroyed, and the inhabitants, who administered to their necessities, have sought refuge in the mountains. The march of Attila was not more withering and destructive. It is but an act of justice to General Taylor to say that he did everything in his power to prevent these excesses, and that they were principally committed by some of the quartermaster's men, who, until they were taught to the contrary by the strong arm of power, did not consider themselves as being amenable to martial or any other law; and by desperate adventurers, called by the army "outsiders," who followed the army for plunder, and frequently

organized themselves into bands to carry on their depredations, not being very particular as to whether they robbed Mexicans or their own countrymen. They emphatically "made war on their own hook." Many of these miscreants were sent home by General Taylor, and every possible precaution was taken to prevent their entrance into Mexico. Many of their misdeeds came under my personal observation, but the difficulty was to identify the individual. In general, the troops behaved with great forbearance and humanity.

In the northern provinces of Mexico there is a strong feeling in favor of a federal, and in decided opposition to a central form of government. This is the instinctive result of a sense of self-preservation, for these people are not prone to indulge in abstract speculations. As there may be said to be no government many miles beyond the city of Mexico, they feel that, while they bear more than a just proportion of the burdens of the state, they receive none of its fostering care or paternal protection. The Federalists are called the American; and the Centralists the Mexican party. The former have been in favor either of becoming an integral portion of our Union, or an independent republic, under our protection and guarantee. How far this would *now* be practicable or desirable, is a question for the politician to settle: the trade of which the joint right of navigating the Rio Grande would give us almost the exclusive advantage, and the introduction of American machinery, to be paid for in the precious metals, might be a matter of some consequence. With the slightest encouragement during the last summer, the whole State of Coahuila would have pronounced against the existing government of Mexico.

Very truly, your obedient servant,

GEO. W. HUGHES.

To Colonel J. J. ABERT,  
*Chief Topographical Engineers.*

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CAMP NEAR MONCLOVA,  
*Mexico, November 14, 1846.*

SIR: Having completed the reconnaissance of the country from Monclova to Quatro Cienegas, (and its vicinity,) on the route to Chihuahua, I have now the honor to submit to the commanding general, in addition to my short communication of the 12th instant, the following descriptive memoir, and accompanying topographical map, of the country embraced in the general's instructions of the 6th instant.

Owing to circumstances not necessary to mention, our first day's march (the 7th of November) terminated at the hacienda of Pozuelos. We left the plaza of Monclova by the main road to Monterey and Saltillo, but soon after quitting the city turned suddenly to the right, skirting the base of a high mountain range to our south, and leaving a series of hills of variable heights to the north. Our course was nearly due west, over a wild and barren region, for several miles, when we entered upon a wide and pretty valley, which, at a distance of nine miles from the city, brought us to the hacienda de Pozuelos, or the *hot well*, an artificial excavation some forty feet deep, which discharges a large volume of hot water, very palatable when it has been allowed to cool. This well irrigates two large

plantations, which nearly exhaust the supply—the surplus being lost in the swamps near Nadadores.

A mule track to Saltillo diverges from this well, as is shown on the map. Our first encampment was at the base of a high chain of mountains, which apparently blocked our further progress in that direction; but by pursuing a circuitous course bearing from NW. to SW. through the highlands, we reached, at a distance of eleven miles by a good road, the San Pedro spring, the source of a large creek flowing in a northwesterly direction down the valley of the Sacramento, which we followed for about three miles to La Villa Nueva, a small and modern town of four hundred and fifty inhabitants. In this quiet and secluded valley we saw the first appearance of improvement since our entrance upon Mexican soil. Within a few miles of each other, two new and respectable looking towns have recently sprung into existence, and many acres of rich but waste lands have been brought into successful cultivation. Here there are no wealthy proprietors nor lordly haciendas to please the eye with their immense proportions, but, what was more gratifying to an American, small, neat tenements, occupied by the owners and tillers of the soil. This valley was covered for miles with fields of maize and cotton, but it is so difficult to obtain authentic statistical information, that I am unable to state the amount of their production.

From Villa Nueva, a course of N. 85 W. brought us, over a distance of eight miles across the valley, to a remarkable mountain pass called el Puerto del Sacramento. It is about three hundred yards wide, the mountain rising almost vertically to an altitude of nearly 2,000 feet, and a huge rock directly in the pass gives it the appearance of a gigantic propylon of some vast temple. The road follows up this gorge, (through which flows a large and rapid stream, called the San Juan, that rises west of Cienegas,) for about six miles, where the mountains widen out, leaving between them a broad and most lovely valley, at the lower end of which is built the hacienda of San Juan. There is not a mile of this pass that does not offer a strong position for defence; but the most formidable is at the upper outlet of the gorge, where it is scarcely two hundred and fifty yards wide, with huge and inaccessible mountains rising almost perpendicularly from its two extremities, while the ground slopes down the pass as evenly as a glacié. As far as I could ascertain, it would be difficult to turn this position if occupied by an enemy.

To the south of the hacienda there are extensive salt ponds, which render the running water rather brackish, and probably impregnate them with sulphate of magnesia.

From the hacienda, a ride along the mountain on the north of the valley for twelve miles in a direction a little south of west brought us to the town of Quatro Cienegas, situated in the midst of this upland valley. For about eight miles the land, though rich and easily irrigated, is left uncultivated, and produces only a luxuriant growth of tall, wild grass.

The town of Cienegas contains, according to the last census, 1,428 inhabitants, or, including its dependencies (of St. Catarina, Rosarios, and Villa del Sacramento) subject to the jurisdiction of the alcalde, 2,682. The people of this district are distinguished for their industry, sobriety, and attachment to their religion. In politics, unlike the citizens of Monclova, they are mostly federalists, and unfriendly to the ruling powers of Mexico. We found them, as they had been represented, favorably inclined

to our government and its institutions. To us, individually, they were unbounded in their kindness and hospitality. For miles around the town the land is cultivated like a garden, and produces the great staples of wheat and cotton in abundance. The grape vine is also reared successfully in large vineyards, and furnishes both a red and white wine of tolerable quality. The first is said to be good, but we saw it only in a dried state. It yields by distillation a pure, but not agreeably flavored brandy, called *aguardiente*. The *maguëy*, (*agave Americana*,) growing sometimes to the height of forty feet, is planted for its pulque. Peaches, figs, melons, and pecans find here a congenial soil and propitious climate.

Nothing can be more enchanting to the sight than this broad and lovely valley, intersected in every direction by streams of running water, surrounded on every side by lofty mountains, impassable except through a few narrow chasms just wide enough to admit the roads and the rushing brooks whose waters are gathered within their recesses. I looked down upon the scene from an eminence, and could but liken it to the Happy Valley of Rasselas.

There are two grist-mills near Cienegas, and two cotton-gins (of American manufacture,) all driven by water-power. The buildings are large, well proportioned, and imposing in appearance; but the machinery of the grist-mills is of the most simple and primitive construction. The shaft is vertical, with a tub-wheel attached to the lower extremity, and the upper millstone to the top. The nether-stone is fixed in the floor, above the pit, and the shaft revolves inside of it, carrying with it the upper stone. The wheat (which in Mexico is always washed and dried before grinding) is taken in sacks, and thrown into a hopper, from which it descends between the stones, and is ground into flour. These mills are unprovided with bolting apparatus, as the flour and bran are not separated for ordinary use. When white bread is baked, (and the best in the world is made in Mexico,) the flour is sifted by hand. The mechanic arts have made but little progress in Mexico, and labor-saving machinery, for ordinary purposes, is almost unknown. Their tools, carts, and agricultural implements are of the rudest description, and are obviously literal copies of their original models. The type of their mode of harnessing and driving oxen, and the form of their carts and ploughs, may be found in the Egyptian drawings and bas-relief. By changing their seed-grain, and introducing the best American system of agriculture, I have no doubt that, with their natural advantages of soil, climate, and means of irrigation, the crops in this portion of Mexico might be more than doubled. At present they never till the earth to a greater depth than three inches; and this has been their system from the beginning. The markets for this district are Monterey, Saltillo, San Luis Potosi, and Chihuahua. Clear cotton is worth here from \$5 to \$6 the cargo of 300 lbs., and flour \$7. Very little maize is grown here; but in the Sacramento it sells for \$1 50 to \$2 the fanega—a little short of three bushels. There are no mines in the vicinity, and no manufactures except those already mentioned.

The roads leading from Cienegas are, 1st, to Monclova, the route we travelled; 2d, to Saltillo, by a mule track, ninety miles; 3d, to Parras, one hundred and eighty miles, by a good cart road, but the deficiency of water for a long distance has caused it to be in a great measure abandoned; 4th, to Sta. Catarina, by a good wagon road, well watered.



St. Catarina, a small hamlet of four hundred and sixteen inhabitants, is situated at the foot of an elevated plateau called the Bolson de Mapimi, about 30 miles N. 80 W. of Cienegas. The road passes alternately through mountain defiles and narrow valleys.

In the mountains between Cienegas and Sta. Catarina there are very extensive forests of white pine and oaks of different kinds, growing to an immense size. The route to Chihuahua passes through St. Catarina; and it is here the real difficulties begin. For at least ninety miles there is no water, except in the rainy season; and several persons who have recently traversed the Bolson de Mapimi unite in saying that the present season is unusually dry, and that the water, which is sometimes to be found in holes, has entirely disappeared. There is only a mule track, and no wagon road, in this direction, after leaving St. Catarina. A Mexican cart has been driven over this line; but it was found necessary often to shift the load, and even to take the carts to pieces, owing to the abrupt and broken nature of the country.

From Agua Chili to Chihuahua the road is said to be excellent; but there is a deficiency of water to St. Rosalin, from whence there is an abundance of everything necessary for the subsistence of troops to Chihuahua. Supposing the representations to be true, (and I have no reason to doubt them,) the natural inference is, the route is impassable for artillery, infantry, and the wagon train. Dragoons mounted on mules, and taking with them pack-mules to carry water, could no doubt effect a passage by this route; but I should consider it to be a most hazardous undertaking to attempt it with any other arm of the service.

Having executed, as far as practicable, the instructions of the commanding general, I returned with the escort as far as the Puerto del Sacramento over our former route, and from thence diverged through the valley of Ranchos Nuevos to the outlet of the Sacramento, in a direction nearly N. 80 E., across the valley. At this point the San Pedro, the San Juan, and the Sacramento creeks unite, forming a large and rapid stream, called the Nadadores, flowing into the Rio Monclova near the Hacienda Las Hermanas, where the junction of the two produces the Rio Salado. This latter river soon afterwards unites with the Sabinos—retaining, however, its original name—and finally discharges its waters into the Rio Grande at Revilla, or Guertilla, as it is sometimes called on the maps.

The pass above mentioned is similar to those already described, the road and the creek occupying nearly the whole of the defile, while the mountain rises suddenly to the height of probably fifteen hundred feet. There are several large caves in the rocks, from which saltpetre is obtained. This defile is about six miles long, and terminates at the rancho Leco. We had now left the mountains, and descended into the plains of Monclova. The road from the rancho soon brought us to a large and new hacienda belonging to Señor Gonzales; and six miles farther, in a nearly straight road, to the town of Nadadores, containing about eight hundred inhabitants. Before reaching this town we passed over a low but very rich country, much of which has been recently drained and cultivated. The position of the village is flat and unhealthy. San Juan Buenaventura lies about three miles off to the north. There is a great deal of corn, cotton, and wheat growing in the neighborhood of this town. Near San Juan is a grist-mill and cotton-gin, driven by water-power; and there is another

grist-mill on a stream called the Sta. Gertrudes, about four and a half miles from San Juan.

From Nadadores to Monclova is about sixteen miles in a southeasterly direction; the road is good, and much of the land in a high state of cultivation. The inhabitants of this village are not very favorably disposed towards us; but many gentlemen of wealth and intelligence are bitterly averse to their present form of government. One of them, who had been in the United States, said to me with great emphasis: "Sir, we have a glorious country, and a good population; but our government is the worst in the world. I would rather be under the dominion of a Comanche chief." The great scourge of this country, which I have attempted to describe in these papers, after its government, is to be found in the sudden irruptions of the Indian tribes—the Lipans, the Mescaleros, and the Comanches—the most treacherous and ruthless of our nomadic races. On our return we found the country in alarm. Couriers had been sent to all the small villages to say that a party of three hundred warriors had passed through the mountains near Santa Rosa, and was descending upon the upland villages, by the way of Santa Catarina. We saw nothing of the Indians, but heard of their being on our trail. So bold are they, or so little do they respect their Mexican neighbors, that a few of them will not hesitate to ride into towns of the size of Cienegas, and lay them under contribution.

I was escorted on this tour of duty by Captain Porter's company of Arkansas cavalry; and it is but an act of justice to the officers and men to say that I have no complaints to make of their conduct, but everything to commend.

The distance to Cienegas, *via* Pozuelos, is about fifty miles; *via* Nadadores, (by a smoother road,) it is some six miles farther. For the *dry* season, this is the preferable route.

I was accompanied in this expedition by Captain Howard, commissary of subsistence, who succeeded in purchasing a large quantity of wheat flour.

Very respectfully, &c., &c., &c.,

GEO. W. HUGHES;

*Captain Topographical Engineers.*

Captain J. H. PRENTISS,

*Assistant Adjutant General, Centre Division, &c., &c., &c.*

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A.

*August 31.*—From La Vaca, eight miles, to the Placedores, a small rivulet, course nearly west across level prairie; very muddy prairie—very muddy from recent rains; thence four miles further in the same direction to the house of ———, a Frenchman, on the right bank of a small muddy stream, with banks eight to ten feet high.

*September 1.*—After crossing this the road continues about WNW. over the same kind of prairie, six miles, to another stream of the same character as the last, up the right bank of which it runs some two miles; and thence a little more northerly to a belt of timbers, two miles from Victoria. Whole distance thirty miles.

September 2.—At Victoria crossed the Guadalupe, some 200 feet wide, by a ferry; thence about two miles, through a thickly timbered bottom, to an open rolling prairie, dry and hard, except at the crossing of two gulleys and a rivulet, twelve miles to the Coletto, a small clear stream, with hard sand and rock bottom. Thence in the same general direction, a little N. of W., thirteen miles to the Manahuila, the crossing of which was muddy and difficult, and six miles further to Goliad, passing another stream of similar character.

September 4.—From Goliad seven miles to the Cabeza, and thence NW. six miles to a pond in the prairie, near which we encamped.

September 5.—Twelve miles to a grassy stream, with bad water; thence two miles to another small stream of good water, having a pretty grove upon its banks. Five miles further crossed a fine stream, with high steep banks. Thence sixteen miles to a rancho, on the right bank of the Cibolo, a considerable stream, with hard stony bottom; the whole distance over rolling prairie, dry and sandy, and covered with muskeet (mezquite?) grass; the timber becoming more abundant. Course about NW., a little N. From the Cibolo six miles to a small stream, and six miles further to a rancho, which is some distance off the road to the left, and on the banks of the San Antonio river. The San Antonio is here some 100 feet wide, with very high, steep banks. Nine miles hence, through pretty well timbered land, to Canteen's rancho, on a fine stream, with steep banks at its crossing. From Canteen's rancho twelve miles across open prairie to the Salado, and nine miles thence to San Antonio, which we reached on the 6th of September.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

L. SITGREAVES,

*Brevet Captain Corps Topographical Engineers.*

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B.

#### MEMOIR.

There are two roads leading from La Vaca, Texas, to San Antonio de Bexar. One of these, the shorter of the two, diverges from the other at Victoria, thirty miles from La Vaca. This passes through Goliad, and is the road which was used by General Wool for the transportation of his supplies. The other passes through Gonzales and Seguin.

I was ordered by you to proceed by the latter route from Victoria to San Antonio, and incidentally to make a reconnaissance of the country passed over by it.

There were no supplies furnished by the quartermaster's department on this road; consequently I was obliged to leave my instruments at Victoria, to be sent by the shorter route, and to set out with no other instrument than a pocket compass. As it was mid-summer, to save our horses we left Victoria just at dusk. During the day the flies are so numerous that the horses are set nearly frantic, and humanity as well as his own comfort will dictate to the traveller in this part of Texas that he must lie by during the day and travel at night. In consequence of this night travelling, my notes have been very imperfect.

Ex.—4

The road continues along the left bank of the river Guadalupe, varying in its distances from the river from a quarter of a mile to a mile and a half.

For the first twelve miles the road goes over a wet prairie, which has been washed by the water into holes, which gives the euphonious name of "hog-wallow" to the prairie. The road is miserable even in dry weather, and in wet weather is said to be impassable. From the soft nature of the soil, the slightest fall of rain makes it bad; and a long continued rain, one can easily imagine, would render the prairie fitter for navigation in boats than for travelling in wagons.

After crossing the prairie the country in the vicinity of the road is found to be thinly timbered with a growth of what is commonly called the post-oak. The road itself is good, being sandy, and the face of the country is level. This timber does not grow regularly, as in the woods of the north, but is scattered in clumps. The height of the tree seldom exceeds twenty feet. The road generally winds through parts where there is no timber. The soil seems to be fertile, but the country is very thinly settled. The distance from Victoria to Gonzales is sixty-three miles, and from the point at which timber commences, fifty-one miles from Gonzales. I noticed in the whole distance but one place where the timber was not post-oak. This was at a small creek eight miles from Gonzales, called McCoy's creek, the banks of which were well timbered with sycamore, oak, &c.

The country becomes more hilly as the road approaches Gonzales, but in no other respect did I notice a change.

Gonzales is a small place of but little interest, containing about 300 inhabitants. It is situated near the junction of the St. Mark's and Guadalupe rivers. The former is crossed by a ferry, the road still continuing along the left bank of the Guadalupe. In the vicinity of Gonzales the country is more thickly settled than I had yet found it.

After leaving Gonzales the soil became visibly more sandy. The hills increased in height, were stony, and the whole face of the country was unprepossessing. This appearance continues as far as a short distance from Seguin, in the vicinity of which place the country visibly improved, and the settlers became much more numerous.

Seguin is thirty-four miles from Gonzales. It is a small place, but little larger than Gonzales. Here, as well as along the whole route, the houses are built of logs. They are divided into three parts. The centre is merely a shed, the roof of the house being all that protects it from the weather. The other two parts are on each side of the centre shed, and are the kitchens, bedrooms, &c., of the establishment. They are rude but very comfortable dwellings, particularly so for so new a country.

About two miles from Seguin the road crosses the Guadalupe, by means of a wooden bridge. The banks of the river are here well timbered with a fine growth of oaks, of various kinds, sycamores, &c.

After leaving the Guadalupe, the road runs nearly west to San Antonio, a distance of thirty-two miles. The muskeet (a variety of the acacia) covers the whole face of the surrounding country. Here it is first seen on the route west, and it continues with little intermission as far as the centre division marched. A succession of parallel ridges, running nearly north and south, intersect the road, giving to the journey something which at first appears to be variety, but which soon proves to be an interminable sameness. The traveller looks forward to see San Antonio in the distance when he has arrived at the top of one of these hills, but he is

disappointed again and again, until he gives up in despair, and, without looking to the right or left, rides sluggishly on until the gray walls of the Alamo, immediately in front of him, give him the pleasing assurance that his journey is ended.

Half way between the Guadalupe and San Antonio the road crosses the Cibolo, a fine, clear stream, about thirty feet in width, very shallow, but with a fine gravelly bottom. Several smaller streams are crossed at intermediate distances, so that this part of the route is as well watered as the first part.

On the whole, this route from Victoria to San Antonio may be said to be a good natural road. With the exception of the first twelve miles the road is good in all weathers, and in all seasons of the year. The greatest obstacle is the St. Mark's river. At present the only means of crossing it is by a ferry, but in a few years the more thickly settled state of the country will render a bridge indispensable; and when this is constructed, there will be an uninterrupted communication from La Vaca to San Antonio.

There will never be any difficulty about supplies on this route, for as the country grows older the farming population will continually increase.

Respectfully submitted:

W. B. FRANKLIN,

*Brevet 1st Lieut., U. S. Topographical Engineer.*

To Major GEORGE W. HUGHES,

*U. S. Topographical Engineer,*

*Chief of the Topographical Staff, Centre Division.*

Captain GEORGE W. HUGHES, *Corps of Topographical Engineers*, will find, in the following memoranda, a hasty and imperfect account of the march of the Arkansas regiment of mounted volunteers to the general rendezvous, at San Antonio de Bexar, which I submit in obedience to his request, accompanied by a rough map of the route taken by the same. This notice must necessarily be very unsatisfactory, not only because I was absent from the command during a considerable portion of the march, but, as I now greatly regret, I took my notes with too little care during that part of our expedition. I then supposed (yet, I have since had reason to believe, very erroneously) that, as the interior of Texas had been so often traversed by tourists, we could find in print reliable and satisfactory information as to the geography of the country, &c. And as there are already extant some two or three maps, compiled, professedly, from *actual surveys*, any topographical notes, with the idea of correcting the current maps, seemed equally supererogatory; but experience has convinced me that the latter are likewise remarkably imperfect. I should note, with regard to the map, that though I endeavored to keep an approximate estimate of distances, I paid very little attention to courses; and, what I still more regret, I was able to determine but very few latitudes, owing, in part, to ill-health, but more to a series of cloudy weather—excessive rains, in fact—during a large portion of the trip. I happen to have with me the diary of a tour through the interior of Texas in the year 1841; but my notes of courses and distances were kept in a separate memorandum-book, which I unfortunately



left behind; yet as each day's journey (assisted by my memory) affords approximation to the distances, I have marked this route, also, with plain dotted lines, however, while that of the Arkansas regiment is colored. The most important points in the intervals are filled up from published maps, and other information, to show their relations; yet I profess to be responsible for none, except those on the routes I have travelled. But, soliciting indulgence for this explanatory digression, I will proceed to the expedition.

The Arkansas regiment rendezvoused at the town of Washington, Hempstead county, Arkansas, in the last of June, and elected their "field officers" early in July. It certainly speaks well for the patriotism of this new State to know that about thirty companies of volunteers offered their services to the governor, and many others would have presented themselves had they not discovered they would be too late.

It seems that the route originally chalked out for this regiment (as well, indeed, as for most of this column) was to cross Red river at Fulton, Arkansas, and proceed thence southwestward, *via* Trinity colony and Austin city, to San Antonio; but on account of receiving supplies at Robbins's Ferry (Trinity river) it became necessary to turn the route in that direction. However, as the arms, equipage, &c., of the regiment, failed to reach Fulton, as was expected, Colonel Yell considered it expedient to come by Shreveport, Louisiana, hoping to meet his supplies there; in which, however, he failed.

I arrived early in July, from Missouri, at the rendezvous, and found the regiment preparing to march. I proceeded, soon after, to Shreveport, for the purpose (besides other business) of having some temporary tents, &c., provided—the troops being almost wholly without. On the 18th July the regiment marched from Washington, and on the seventh day reached Shreveport—a distance of about one hundred and ten miles. It should be noted, in justice to the energy and expedition with which the officers executed their duties, that on the 24th the regiment marched fifteen miles, and ferried Red river by ten o'clock the same evening—about eight hundred men and horses, with a train of forty wagons—in two or three very inferior boats. In fact, I may here remark, once for all, that the Sabine, Trinity, Brazos, Colorado and Guadalupe rivers were severally crossed, in addition to making a fair day's march, in one day.

On the 26th of July the regiment marched from Shreveport, and encamped near the village of Greenwood, (about four miles east of the Texas line,) making about sixteen miles over a gently undulating, but rather level country. Remaining behind, on business, I did not overtake the regiment till ten o'clock on the night of October 4th. I found it encamped about three miles east of Crockett, a village in Texas, about one hundred and fifty miles from Shreveport. The road throughout this distance is generally good; country alternately level and undulating; sometimes hilly, but by no means mountainous.

This region may generally be regarded as of rather thin soil; yet much of it of fertile character, producing Indian corn and most vegetables reasonably well, and cotton very finely. This latter should be regarded as the great staple of those regions. The timber is mostly post-oak, black-jack, black hickory, and in some places short-leaf pitch-pine. We also find sweet-gum, chinquopin, and many other growth, with great abundance of sassafras. I may here remark, that I observed no sassafras

west of the waters of Trinity river. As yet, we find no prairies on this route, except an occasional insignificant, timberless glade.

*August 5th.*—At Crockett the regiment was divided, one-half taking the road to a ferry three miles below Robbins's, while the balance kept the direct route to Robbins's ferry. I came with the latter division; made some fourteen miles; road tolerably good.

*Thursday, 6th.*—About twelve miles to Trinity river; ferried it, and pitched camp two or three miles to the west. The other division (under Colonel Roane) crossed at the lower ferry and reached same camp to-night.

The regiment had necessarily to remain here two or three days, to receive a lot of supplies which had been transported to Robbins's ferry on steamboats; but owing to bad weather, the delay was longer than had been contemplated. During our stay here it rained almost incessantly; in fact, it had been remarkably—very unusually—rainy for the last month or six weeks, where I have travelled. I think I might safely say, that in forty days I had at least thirty rains upon me.

*Monday, 10th.*—Marched from the Trinity camp to-day. Owing to the excessive rains, the roads had become not only very muddy, but miry; so that, though the horsemen made near fifteen miles, most of the "train" only came about ten—the wagons frequently bogging down, even on the high grounds, to the very axletrees. I should have noted that Major Bonneville's command of infantry and dragoons reached Trinity on Sunday last.

*Tuesday, 11th.*—Last night's camp was on a creek, called Cany, (a branch of the Bidais,) which the rains had swelled to swimming; therefore it was found necessary, this morning, to bridge it, which was completed before midday, and at one o'clock we marched, making about eight miles—crossing another branch or two of the Bidais—still leaving a portion of the train behind. Before this was got up, several hard showers of rain that intervened so flooded the brooks on the way, that it was necessary to bridge a couple more of them, wherefore all the train did not reach this camp till the 13th.

*Friday, 14th.*—Marched about twenty miles; camped nearly two miles to northeast of a little village known as Fanthorp's. Some handsome and fertile-looking upland prairies, interspersed with groves of black-jack, post-oak, &c. Water scarce during dry weather.

*Saturday, 15th.*—Some eighteen miles; country somewhat similar, yet fewer prairies, and consequently less rich land; for it may be observed that, in all this region, the prairies are the most fertile lands, except river bottoms, that are to be found. Camp at the edge of the Brazos bottom.

*Sunday, 16th.*—Four miles through the very boggy bottoms of Brazos river; ferried the river at Washington, immediately below the mouth of Navasoto river.

*Monday, 17th.*—Marched about twenty miles, and camped four or five miles west of the village of Independence. West of the Brazos river the country assumes a richer and more agreeable appearance. Though from a few miles beyond Trinity river we have had frequent detached prairies, yet they are neither so extensive nor so beautiful as those west of the Brazos. But these are not of the character of the broad, monotonous, and almost interminable plains found between our western frontier and the Rocky mountains; they are high and rolling, beautifully interspersed

with groves of live oak, hackberry, and occasionally pecan, romantically bespeckled almost everywhere with chance isolated trees of the same, the whole bordered by dense forests of post-oak, black-jack, black hickory, &c., with cedar, cottonwood, sycamore, &c., on the streams. These prairies are generally as fertile-looking as they are beautiful, producing all the vegetables exceedingly well, especially yams and sweet potatoes; while we were assured that the great staples of cotton, sugar, and even wheat, might be cultivated to great advantage, although here, at least on the road, we met with nothing but Indian corn on the farms. The crops of this showed quite fair for the climate, though not equal to those of the north.

*Tuesday, 18th.*—Made about twelve miles over a country quite similar to that of yesterday. Though in these regions we perceive little local indications of bilious disease, still I was informed that the inhabitants suffered from fever and ague to no small degree, especially in autumn. Speaking of the forest growth, I should have noted that live oak timber, though of a scrubby character, now became quite abundant in the high-lands. An occasional scrubby *mezquite* tree also made its appearance; though, as yet, I had seen but one or two. I might here remark, also, that prior to this time, at least as far as the Brazos, the bottoms of the rivers and larger creeks were generally thickly set with that species of *cane* which so abounds in the lower Mississippi valley; yet, from this forward I observed no more of it. No sassafras nor pine west of Trinity waters on this route; yet the latter is quite abundant higher up on the Colorado.

*Wednesday, 19th.*—About sixteen miles; country similar to that of yesterday.

*Thursday, 20th.*—Six or seven miles to the village of Rutersville; contains scarcely over one hundred souls. Thence five or six miles to La Grange, a town of two or three hundred inhabitants, near the east bank of the Colorado river. I should have remarked that Major Bonneville's command passed us at Fanthorp's, beyond the Brazos, and was now a day ahead. Crossed the Colorado half a mile below La Grange without difficulty, and pitched a romantic camp on the bordering high bluff; a good spring hard by. This was my first convenient opportunity to take latitude; found the camp in  $29^{\circ} 53'$  north.

*Friday, 21st.*—Marched some twelve miles, and camped on a high and romantically beautiful ridge, sparsely covered with live oak and pecan trees; broad prairie spreads out to southward, but country mostly timbered to the north and west. The timber about our camp resembled, for all the world, an old waste orchard of large apple trees. The route to-day led through a country variegated with handsome prairies and groves of live oak, pecan, post-oak, black-jack, black hickory, &c. The two first indicate the richest lands, growing generally most abundant about the prairies. Latitude of this camp  $29^{\circ} 46\frac{1}{2}'$ .

*Saturday, 22d.*—About fourteen miles to-day, and camped on a small stream, said to be the headmost branch of La Vaca river.

*Sunday, 23d.*—I left the regiment this morning in company with Major Borland and escort for San Antonio. Though yesterday's march was over a country similar to that of day before, that from here to Gonzales is of a poorer character, and mostly timbered with black jack, post oak, and some black hickory, also occasional live oak, &c. About sixteen miles

to Beach creek. Large *mezquite* timber now began to make its appearance. Ten miles further to the village of Gonzales, near northeast bank of Guadalupe river. Much complaint of bilious disease about here. Gonzales contains scarcely one hundred souls. Two miles, and ferried the San Marco river; only about fifty feet wide, but deep and sluggish. Six miles further, and bivouacked at King's. Old King afforded one of the most perfect samples of a "Texan Hoosier" that I had met with; emphatically "a jolly old soul," with no lack of "breath to blow his own trumpet of fame." He came to Texas, he said, thirty-four years ago; had reared a large family there—sons and daughters and sons-in-law settled all around him. Taking his own story for it, he had been in all the battles with every enemy, whether savage or Mexican, that had invaded the country, and had had a thousand "hair-breadth 'scapes." In the sequel, to prove his patriotism, he charged us double price for everything he furnished us.

*Monday, 24th.*—About twenty-five miles, and stayed to-night at the little village of Seguin—cutting our day's journey short on account of there being no settlement in reach ahead; in fact, none between this place and San Antonio. The truth is, this route is mostly very sparsely settled, especially west of the Colorado. The village of Seguin, though now containing less than one hundred souls, may yet become a flourishing town, as it is a healthy-looking site, near the northwestern bank of the Guadalupe river, and beautifully watered by several fine springs. It might become a manufacturing town, as two falls of the Guadalupe—one immediately below, the other above town—afford extensive water-power. It is also believed that the Guadalupe river may be made navigable to this vicinity, for small steamboats, during more than half the year. Likewise all the other important streams of Texas crossed by us afford flattering prospects of navigation for half the year. The Sabine has already been ascended to a considerable distance; the Trinity far above Robbins's ferry; the Brazos, also, above Washington, and the Colorado to La Grange. But the navigation of both Colorado and Brazos is considerably interrupted by rapids. On the latter, just below the crossing of the "old San Antonio road," near the mouth of Little Brazos, I saw a fall of at least five or six feet perpendicular in the distance of fifty yards. The Trinity, though a narrow stream, affords the best navigation, perhaps, of any river in Texas. As far as the Guadalupe river the *long gray moss* of the south is found particularly abundant in the low grounds, and frequently even in the highlands; but west of the Guadalupe bottoms I saw none at all, except about the head of the San Antonio river.\*

*Tuesday, 25th.*—Crossed Guadalupe river this morning about a mile from Seguin; river here some thirty or forty yards wide—clear, deep, and sluggish. From Seguin to Cibolo creek about fifteen miles, thence to Salado creek fifteen miles, and five miles further to San Antonio de Bexar. The last two streams are of beautiful, clear water—nearly equal, being of small mill-power size. The country, after crossing Guadalupe river, as-

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\* I should have remarked, that up the course of the Guadalupe river there are some fine lands—in fact, some of the most fascinating farm sites I ever saw; literally "hills and dales" delightfully connected. On the one side we could have a rich, high prairie bottom of one thousand acres, or more; and on the other, gently elevated hills, beautifully shaded with live oak, &c., for residence sites. The alternation of prairie and timbered land still continued.

sumes decidedly a new character—level, dry-looking plains, fertile-looking soil, being a dark vegetable loam; timber scarce, but no perfectly bare prairies, being sparsely set everywhere with scrubby *mexquite*, and occasional pecan, hackberry, live-oak, &c., altogether very similar to the lower plains about San Antonio.

The Arkansas regiment followed the same route, and arrived at San Antonio (or Camp Crockett) on the 28th of same month.

Captain Hughes desired some account of the history of San Antonio de Bexar. In this brief notice I shall aim to insert nothing that was apparent to every observer, as I could not have the presumption to relate what Captain Hughes was more capable of seeing for himself.

Tradition says that the present site of this town was originally a *Pueblo* of Indians, called the *Texas*, whence the name of the province. Judge Morgan (of San Antonio) informed me that according to the archives, a presidio, or garrison, was established there in 1715, and that a colony of families immigrated to the place from the Canary Islands in 1732. Nevertheless, it will be perceived from the following passage in "Los Tres Siglos de Mexico," p. 78 of vol. 2, that attempts at least were made at a much earlier period. After speaking of the settlement of Monclova; the author relates that in the year 1691, "in the neighboring province of *Asinai*, or, as called by the Spaniards, *Texas*, (perhaps the most pacifically-inclined nation on the continent,) the governor of Coahuila was ordered to select a site for a *presidio*; and it was provided that fourteen *padres Franciscans* should labor in that ministry. The *presidio* and missions were actually located during this period; yet a long drought having supervened after the lapse of two or three years, which caused the death of the cattle that had been taken there, the loss of the crops, and the ill will of the Indians towards the Spaniards on account of the vexations occasioned them by the latter, nearly all the missions were abandoned."

Yet, by the two following passages from the same history, pp. 113 and 130, we will perceive that Judge Morgan's information was virtually correct, or nearly so: "1715. At the close of this year the *presidio* of *Texas* was already established, and the *padres Franciscans* employed themselves in reducing those savages and forming *pueblos*." "1731. In this year the Marquis de Casafuerte sent a colony of Canarians, who settled in the town which he caused to be built, the plan of which was laid off by Don Antonio de Villaseñor."

According to tradition, the original *presidio* was located west of San Pedro creek, two or three hundred yards from the *Plaza Militar*. But upon the immigration of the Canarians (or *Isleños*, Islanders, as more frequently termed by the people,) the Indians, I suppose, having been pretty well rooted out, the former located themselves just east of the present church, forming what is still termed the *Plaza de los Isleños*. The church is said to have been founded about 1740, and the *Plaza Militar*, immediately back of the church, was doubtless established between this period and the immigration of the Canarians.

Of those old missions in the vicinity of San Antonio I need only say a word concerning their foundation. The most important are said to have been built under the direction of a famous monk called Padre Margil. The mission of La Concepcion, as tradition says, is the oldest, which is confirmed by the date, over the door, of 1754; while that of the Alamo is



1758. I could find no date about either of the other ruins except on the steeple of San José, which I think is not to be depended upon, being 1781.

I can now think of nothing else that would be likely to interest Captain Hughes, of which he might not have obtained information himself more satisfactory than I could presume to give him. I will merely add that, by various observations, I determined the latitude of the public square of San Antonio to be  $29^{\circ} 25' 30''$ ; longitude, by eclipses of Jupiter's satellites, about  $98^{\circ} 52'$  west from Greenwich.

Owing to the very hasty manner in which the foregoing paragraphs were written, I find, upon glancing over them, so much monotony, repetition—indeed, confusion and ambiguity, I fear—that I could not offer them to Captain Hughes in their present condition, had I time to re-write them; but I must trust to his indulgence for an apology.

Very respectfully,

JOSIAH GREGG.

PARRAS, December 7, 1846.

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*Memoir of a reconnaissance of a route from Monclova, Mexico, to Monterey, Mexico, made in November, 1846.*

SIR: On the 14th of November, 1846, I left Monclova, under orders from Brigadier General Wool, to proceed to Monterey with all possible despatch, and to report to Major General Taylor for despatches. Incidentally I was to make a reconnaissance of the route between the two places, but the first object was speed. An escort of six men of the Arkansas regiment, commanded by Lieutenant Desha of that regiment, accompanied me, as did also Captain Webb of the Illinois volunteers, and Mr. Danno of New Orleans, a commissary agent. Both of the latter were on their way to the United States.

Having no guide, I was obliged to depend for my knowledge of the road on such information as I could pick up about it in Monclova on the morning of the start.

I left the town about 7 a. m., and after travelling for about two hours in a direction east of south, arrived at a small village called Castaña. Here was a fine stream of good water, and a very good camping ground. The village is small, not containing more than two or three hundred inhabitants. They are supported by the cultivation of the land in the vicinity, which produces fine crops of corn. Twenty-three miles farther is Bajan. This is a deserted rancho, and the ground in the vicinity gives evidence of having once been in a high state of cultivation. There is a small stream of good water here, and a pool formed by an embankment. In the immediate vicinity of the pool the ground is marshy, and there is a fine growth of grass upon it. Here I encamped for the night. At Castaña I was joined by a Mexican, who, finding out that I was going to Monterey, requested permission to travel with me. As he said he had been over the road frequently, I was very glad to grant him the permission, and found him very serviceable as a guide throughout the whole route.

From Monclova to Bajan the road is nearly straight. Between Monclova and Castaña it is rough, but from the latter place to Bajan it runs

over a plain, and is very smooth. The only vegetation along this part of the route is the muskeet and prickly pear. At intervals, some coarse dry grass appeared, but it was so covered with the dust, which was very thick, that it was almost useless as food for the horses.

The road runs along a valley, bounded on both sides by high mountains, the tops of which are about ten miles apart.

As far as Bajan the roads to Monterey and Parras from Monclova coincide. At that point they separate—that to Monterey striking to the east, and the Parras road keeping to the west.

The Monterey road for twenty miles is good, running over a soil that appeared to require only water to make it fertile. As it is, nothing but muskeet and cactus grow, solely owing, I imagine, to the absence of rain. The direction of the road varies a little north of east, bending gradually to the south. About twenty miles from Bajan is a miserable rancho, where we found a large flock of goats. These subsist on the scanty herbage in the vicinity, and water is obtained for them from a large well. The water was pretty good, but would not have been sufficient for General Wool's command without a large supply of vessels to contain it, for constant drawing for twenty-four hours would have been required for the large quantity of animals with the army.

From this point the road becomes more rough, and approaches nearer to the mountains to the east of it. The direction is still southeast. About seven miles from the rancho it crosses a small stream, on which was a fine growth of grass. The water of this was so bitter that we could not drink it. Eight miles farther is another rancho, the family at which appeared to be engaged in making muscal. Nothing but the maguey and muskeet grows in the vicinity, and the master of the place told me that he obtained his corn at a hacienda to the northeast, which was not in sight. Probably this rancho is a dependency of the hacienda spoken of. The only water was contained in a tanque, was nearly putrid, and there was very little of it. We arrived here at 4 p. m., and after feeding our horses, and resting for an hour, set out again. About 12 p. m. we encamped in a large growth of muskeet, with some good grass. The night was very dark, so that, from the last rancho to camp I know nothing of the road, except that it was very rough, and once we made a considerable ascent and descent, which, with the partial view of the mountains near us, led me to believe we were going through some mountain pass. The whole distance travelled to-day was fifty miles.

As there was no water at or near the camp, we started about 4 o'clock a. m., and, after travelling twenty miles over a road a good deal cut up by rain channels, arrived at a place named, according to the guide, Cañas.

This we found to be a hacienda, with a large extent of ground in a high state of cultivation. Sugar-cane was the principal crop. There was some corn growing, but not more than enough for food for the inhabitants of the place. We rested here during the heat of the day, and about 3 p. m. started again, and after travelling twelve miles, encamped two miles south of a place called by the guide Pueblito. The vicinity of the road during this day's march, until we arrived at Cañas, presented almost identically the same appearance that it had previously. It was entirely barren, producing nothing but muskeet and maguey, and was hemmed in by high mountains, apparently ten miles apart. At Cañas all this changed. The maguey disappeared, the Spanish bayonet taking its

place; the soil produced some grass, and we appeared to be getting into a country susceptible of some cultivation. Four miles south of Cañas we crossed a stream about thirty yards in width and two feet in depth, which flowed eastwardly through a gap in the mountains to the west, and which had worn for itself, in the soft soil, a deep and broad bed. The road was crossed at intervals of two or three miles by small streams flowing from the mountains, and the banks of these were well settled by small farmers, who produced an abundance of corn.

On the 18th, making an early start, we arrived at a village about five miles from Pueblito, called Abasolo. It contained about five hundred inhabitants, and is beautifully situated on both sides of the river above mentioned.\* Here we obtained corn for our horses. Two miles farther, is a small village called Chipinque; three miles from this, another of the same size named Topo Grande; and six miles farther, another called Topito. The river leaves the road at Chipinque, flowing off towards the east. At Topito another small stream crosses the road, flowing northeast. It is doubtless a branch of the first stream. Thirteen miles farther is Monterey.

Along the whole of this day's march (twenty-four miles) the country was well settled, well watered, and the soil was fertile—the whole face of the country presenting a more cheerful appearance than anything I had yet seen in Mexico.

The great scarcity of water on the part of the road midway between Monclova and Monterey presents an obstacle to the march of an army almost insuperable. In the whole distance from Castaña to Cañas there is but one running stream, and the water of that is so impregnated with salts that it is impossible to drink it. My guide told me that it affected horses so much that they never were allowed to taste it. The supplies of water at the two ranchos are so limited that they would not go far towards remedying the evil.

The road is but little travelled by Mexicans; for the Camanches, in making their marauding excursions into the west, cross the road in several places, so that a small party is in great danger along the whole route. I was informed Bajan had been deserted on account of the depredations of the Indians, and that now it is a favorite camping-ground for them on their way to and from the scenes of their depredations.

Respectfully submitted:

W. B. FRANKLIN,

*Brevet First Lieutenant United States Top. Engineers.*

To Major G. W. HUGHES,

*Corps Topographical Engineers, United States army.*

#### *From Monterey to Saltillo.*

Not finding General Taylor at Monterey, I left that place on the 20th of November for Saltillo, where he then was. As the road between these two places has been often described by reconnoitring officers who have gone over it, I shall merely state that it is a good wagon road, well watered,

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\* This stream is doubtless a branch of the San Juan.

and with an abundant supply of forage throughout the whole distance which is between fifty-five and sixty miles.

About half way between the two places is a hacienda called La Rinconada. This was the usual camping-ground for our mounted troops in their marches from one place to the other, as they generally made the trip in two days. Infantry made the march in three days—on the first day encamping at a village named Santa Catarina, about eight miles west of Monterey; on the second at a rancho, about twenty-one miles from Saltillo, named, from a warm spring near it, Ojo Caliente; and the third day marching into or near to Saltillo.

On the 21st of November I met General Taylor and his staff, on their return from Saltillo to Monterey. After delivering my despatches, I was ordered by him to proceed to Saltillo, and await further orders from him there. I arrived at Saltillo that evening, and two days afterwards received despatches from him, with orders to proceed from that place to Monclova by the shortest route.

*From Saltillo towards Monclova.*

On the 25th of November I left Saltillo for Monclova. By the kindness of Major General Worth, then in command at Saltillo, I had been furnished with a guide; and Lieutenants Armstead and Buckner, 6th infantry, started with me to join their regiment, part of which was with General Wool's column. These gentlemen, (the escort which came with me from Monclova,) the guide, and myself, formed the party.

For the first nine miles from Saltillo the road to Monclova is excellent, being perfectly straight and smooth, and nearly level. The direction for this distance is nearly north. The country in the vicinity is in a good state of cultivation, and the principal crops were corn and wheat.

Capillania is a small village on the road, nine miles from Saltillo. It contains about five hundred inhabitants, and is pleasantly situated on the stream that flows by Saltillo. Here the road begins to run along the stream and becomes rough. Seven miles farther is a rancho called San Diego, where we encamped for the night.

Next morning, after marching four miles in a direction north of west, we crossed the river; and about a mile farther the road enters the mountains, winding about in every direction. It is so very rough that it would be extremely difficult, indeed almost impossible, to bring a wagon-train through it. Where it is possible, it is kept along the banks of the river, which it crosses and recrosses several times. This rough road continues about ten miles, when it emerges from the mountains on to a smooth plain, on which it ran for the remainder of the day's march.

Twenty-five miles from San Diego is a large hacienda called Mesillas. There was a large number of cattle here, and a great extent of ground in cultivation, on which corn and wheat were the only crops. Where the road leaves the mountains were a few huts, in the vicinity of which a little corn was raised. Two miles in front of Mesillas we crossed the river, leaving it flowing to the east, and saw nothing more of it. Five miles north of Mesillas is another large hacienda, called Perros Bravos, where we spent the night.

Leaving Perros Bravos, after marching four miles we crossed a road which ran to Parras; and two miles farther, a stream called by the guide

the Salinos. Its course was nearly east and west. It was about twenty yards wide, and eighteen inches deep. It flowed to the east, and is probably the same stream I crossed before at Cañas. Nine miles from Los Bravos is Anelo. This is a very large hacienda, beautifully situated on a small rivulet, near the Salinos. There was, in addition to the corn and wheat, some sugar-cane raised here. Fifteen miles northwest of Anelo is the Estanque of San Felipe. This, as its name implies, is an artificial reservoir of water, and was made, I imagine, for the use of the cattle of Anelo, which are allowed to wander in the vicinity. Between Anelo and this place the road is perfectly level, hemmed in on both sides by mountains, and the ground in the vicinity is covered with a growth of grass and muskeet.

When we were about five miles from the tanque, our attention was attracted by a long line of dust to our left and front. Not knowing what it could be, we consulted the guide, who informed us that it must be caused by Indians. We were obliged to rest satisfied with this information, but were undeceived when we arrived at the tanque. There we met some volunteers who were engaged in repairing a wagon. They informed us that General Wool's division had passed there that day on their march to Parras, and that they were encamped about fifteen miles farther on the road to our left. Following their directions, we reached the General's camp about 8 o'clock in the evening. Had it not been for the fortunate accident of the breaking down of this wagon, we would probably have gone on to Monclova, as the road was so dusty that every trace of the march of the army was effaced almost as soon as it was made.

It would be almost impossible to march an army from San Felipe to Saltillo by the route through Anelo and Mesillas, on account of the roughness of the road through the mountains north of San Diego. With this exception the road is very good, and the supplies both of forage and water are abundant. The whole distance from Saltillo to the estanque of San Felipe is seventy miles.

Respectfully submitted:

W. B. FRANKLIN,

*Brevet First Lieutenant Topographical Engineers.*

To Major G. W. HUGHES,

*Topographical Engineers, United States army.*

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On the 17th of December, 1846, General Wool received intelligence from General Worth, which led him to believe that the presence of his division of the army would be highly necessary in the vicinity of Saltillo.

On the same day the whole division was put *en route*, though they had but two hours' notice. The force under the command of General Wool consisted of the following troops: one company of field artillery, four companies of dragoons, and three companies of infantry—all regulars. Of volunteers, there were one regiment of cavalry, two regiments of infantry, and one independent company of infantry incorporated in the battalion of the three companies of regular infantry. The whole amounted to about three thousand men.

There are two wagon roads from Parras to Saltillo. The more direct of these is good for fifteen miles from Parras, where it crosses a line of



mountains called Los Infernos. The road is so rough and dangerous in these mountains, that without very thorough repairs, made with the expenditure of much time and labor, it is impassable for a train. This consideration induced the general to take the more circuitous route, which passes through Cienega Grande, making the distance about fifteen miles longer. This route joins the other road near Castañuela, about thirty miles from Parras.

With the single exception of the passage through Los Infernos mentioned above, the route from Saltillo to Parras is excellent, and by the road that General Wool marched there is not a single obstruction. It runs through a valley from beginning to end, so that it is nearly level; is intersected by numerous small streams flowing towards the north, so that there is no scarcity of water, and the few haciendas scattered along afford plenty of forage—the only supply needed by General Wool's division.

One company of the regular infantry was left at Parras as a guard of the sick, and one squadron of the volunteer cavalry was absent with Captain Hughes, topographical engineers, on an expedition towards Durango. The remainder of the division, with the exception of three companies of volunteer infantry which had been left at Monclova, was put *en route* on the 17th of December, 1846. On the afternoon of that day the dragoons and artillery encamped about ten miles from Parras, in a gorge of the mountains, and the infantry and volunteer cavalry about three miles from Parras.

On the 18th the artillery and dragoons encamped at a rancho near Castañuela, and the infantry at a small rancho called Misteña, fifteen miles behind.

On the 19th both columns marched to Patos, a large hacienda, the residence of the Sanchez family.

On the 20th the division reached San Juan de la Vaqueria, and on the 21st encamped at Agua Nueva, a rancho about seventeen miles south of Saltillo.

The original intention of the general had been to encamp at La Encantada, seven or eight miles nearer Saltillo, but on arriving there he changed his mind, and marched back to Agua Nueva.

The distance from Parras to Agua Nueva, by the route marched by General Wool, was a little more than one hundred miles, so that in the space of four days the division had marched that distance, being on an average more than twenty-five miles a day.

This is probably the best march that was made during the war; and it is to be remembered, too, that the men were in excellent health and spirits after its completion.

W. B. FRANKLIN,  
*Brevet 1st Lieutenant U. S. Topographical Engineers.*

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SAN ANTONIO DE BEXAR, September 9, 1846.

SIR: I have been assigned, by orders from the Topographical Bureau of the 6th August, 1846, as chief of the topographical staff of the army under the command of Brigadier General Wool, and, by the same orders, the following officers have been designated as my assistants, viz: 1st Lieu

tenant L. Sitgreaves, 2d Lieutenant W. B. Franklin, 2d Lieutenant F. T. Bryan.

And I now have the honor to report that I am prepared to execute any to which I may be assigned by the commanding general. Lieutenant Sitgreaves is present with me, Lieutenants Franklin and Bryan having been left at La Vaca to make astronomical observations for the determination of latitude and longitude. They have also been directed to reconnoitre the Gonzales road to this place. The road by the way of Goliad has been carefully examined by Lieutenant Sitgreaves on our way up.

I would respectfully suggest that, as soon as it suits the convenience of the general-in-chief, a strong body of mounted men should be thrown forward to the Rio Grande for the purpose of affording protection to the topographical parties. Such force would probably be better and more cheaply subsisted near San Fernando than here. I propose to accompany the advance guard of the army, with the view of reconnoitring the country between the Rio Grande and the city of Chihuahua, through the mountains, as I am persuaded of the existence of a road in that direction; but whether practicable for artillery and wagon trains, I have no means of ascertaining. According to Captain (afterwards General) Z. M. Pike, of St. Croix, afterwards viceroy of Peru, took this road (that is, over the mountains) in 1778 on his way from Chihuahua, Coquilla, Allases, and Texas." With a regiment at Presidio de Rio Grande, or at San Fernando, as a point d'appui, I will undertake, with two companies of mounted men, to penetrate through the mountains.

It has also been suggested that a route practicable for artillery may be found through the highlands on the east of the Rio Grande, intersecting the Puerco river about seventy-five miles above its mouth, and crossing the Rio Grande at the confluence of the Conchos. If it should meet with the approbation of the general, I also propose to examine the country in that direction; it will at least contribute to our geographical information of a portion of our territory but imperfectly known.\*

In the mean time I propose to examine the country in the vicinity of San Antonio, and to correct the map of Texas by information to be obtained from the various commands which have entered the State in different directions, concentrating on this point. Lieutenant Brent, of Captain Washington's company, has taken copious notes of their line of march, of which I shall, with his permission, avail myself.

It is also my desire, as soon as a corps of topographical rangers can be organized, (under the authority of a recent regulation of the War Department,) to at once enter upon a reconnaissance of the country between this place and the Nueces, with the object of being able to designate the most convenient positions for the encampments of the different corps on their march, (a duty devolved on the topographical staff by paragraph 880, general regulations of the army,) for which I propose leaving at least one officer of my command at headquarters with the main body of the army. Having referred to the extended and exposed nature of our duties, it seems to me that the topographical rangers should consist of at least

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\* This is the route recently examined by Colonel Hays, and pronounced to be practicable for wagons. It will open a direct communication between our post in Texas and those in New Mexico.

two companies, who would constitute generally a portion of the advance guard of the army en route, and would be occupied at other times in detachments for the protection of the reconnoitring parties.

Very respectfully, sir, your obedient servant,

GEORGE W. HUGHES,  
*Captain Topographical Engineers.*

Lieutenant J. McDOWELL,  
*A. A. Adj't. General of the army of Chihuahua.*

The topographical party is provided with the necessary instruments for the determination of geographical positions by latitude and longitude.

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SAN ANTONIO, *December 13, 1848.*

SIR: It may be of interest and importance to yourself, and the department you direct, to receive some additional information to that which you doubtless already possess of the country lying between this place and the State of Chihuahua, in Mexico. The citizens of San Antonio have for many years been anxious to establish a trade with that portion of Mexico by opening a direct communication with it; but numerous difficulties and obstacles prevented the accomplishment of this object. In August last the citizens of San Antonio fitted out an expedition to explore a route practicable for wagons to Presidio del Norte, and Paso del Norte, which I had the honor to conduct. We set out on the 27th August, and returned the 12th December, having succeeded in discovering a way perfectly practicable for wagons at all seasons of the year. The road will run from this place east of north to the head of either the San Saba or Conchos rivers, both tributaries of the Colorado, and which rise within a few miles of each other, distant about one hundred and fifty miles; from thence, in an almost southwest direction, to the Rio Pecos or Puercos, fifty miles; thence up the Puercos about fifty, and from thence, in a southwest course, to Presidio del Norte, one hundred and fifty or one hundred and sixty miles; making in all a distance of about four hundred miles, either by the way of Presidio del Norte, ascending the Rio Grande, or by going fifty miles higher on the Rio Pecos than the Presidio road will go, and then passing over to the Rio Grande and ascending it. We did not examine the whole distance to the Paso del Norte, but have learned from information upon which we fully rely, that there will be no difficulty whatever in going from one town to the other. The distance from Presidio del Norte to Paso del Norte is about one hundred and fifty miles. For seventy-five miles of the way from this place (San Antonio) to the head of the San Saba there is a good wagon road now in use, and from that point the country is generally level, with but few hills, and they are small. From the San Saba to the Pecos the country is almost perfectly level, covered with muskeet trees, and bearing an abundance of grass and but little water. I have little doubt, however, that at most seasons of the year water can be found at intervals of ten or twelve miles. We were four days in passing this plain, and found water at every encampment. A further examination of this country will no doubt show more water. At the point where the road will strike the Pecos the hills begin to recede from the river, and the valley, in a few miles, opens into a wide plain,

which continues nearly the whole length of the river. There is abundance of grass and fuel on this plain, but no trees; the wood used for burning, and almost the only growth, is the small muskeet. From the Pecos to the Rio Grande the country is for more than half the distance level; the remainder of it is down a valley, where the points of some hills are necessary to be crossed, but offering at no place any considerable obstruction. Fifteen miles above the Presidio del Norte, on the Rio Grande, there is large timber in abundance, and the distance to Paso del Norte is generally level. The average distance from the Rio Pecos to the Rio Grande is, from about forty miles above their junction, nearly one hundred and twenty-five miles. Ten or fifteen miles below Presidio del Norte, high broken hills, set in close to the river, so as to render approach to it difficult, or even almost impossible, except at a few points. These hills continue below the mouth of the Pecos about forty or fifty miles. From the mouth of the Pecos up to within a few miles of where the road probably cross it, the same character of hills, rugged and broken, renders travelling very near the river next to impossible. About seventy-five miles southeast of Presidio del Norte, we passed through a country giving every indication of great mineral wealth; and we were informed by the residents of a ranche below Presidio, that a silver mine in that neighborhood had formerly been worked by the Mexicans, which was reported to have been very rich, but the working of it to any great extent was prevented by the Indians. Rich specimens of gold and silver were shown us from mines in the vicinity.

From Matagorda bay to Presidio del Norte will not much exceed five hundred and forty miles, or seven hundred miles to Paso del Norte; and nearly the whole distance is level, with an abundance of grass, fuel, and water. The Rio Pecos may not be found fordable at all times; but it is a narrow stream, and easy ordinarily to cross. If I might venture to suggest the most favorable time for the movement of troops from this part of the country to Paso del Norte, I would say the latter part of March, at which season of the year the grass is good and abundant, and the weather is mild and pleasant. In the winter months, soldiers would suffer considerably on the plains from the cold north winds.

Respectfully,

JOHN C. HAYS.

Hon. W. L. MARCY,  
*Secretary of War.*

*Recapitulation of latitudes observed in Texas and Mexico, 1846-'47.*

La Vaca, Texas.....	28°	37'	00"	north.
Victoria, " .....	28	46	57	"
One mile north of San Antonio, Texas.....	29	26	53.4	"
Left bank Medina river, near Castroville, Texas.....	29	20	15.3	"
Right bank Seco river, Texas.....	29	20	56.95	"
" Little Sabinos, Texas.....	29	15	52.7	"
" Rio Frio, Texas.....	29	17	32	"
" Leona, Texas.....	29	08	00	"
Left bank Nueces, Texas.....	28	59	13.8	"

Reynoso creek, Texas.....	28°	39'	38.9"	north.
Las Cuevas, Texas.....	28	30	53.7	"
Left bank Rio Grande, Texas.....	28	22	43.4	"
Four miles from Presidio del Rio Grande, Mexico.....	28	20	48.5	"
Near Nava, Mexico.....	28	24	43	"
Five miles from San Fernando de Rosa, Mexico.....	28	24	39.5	"
At Santa Rita river, Mexico.....	28	16	52.3	"
Rio Alamos, Mexico.....	27	58	20.5	"
1½ mile ESE. of Santa Rosa, Mexico.....	27	52	02.7	"
Arroyo del Ahura, (right bank,) Mexico.....	27	33	20.0	"
4 miles north of Monclova, Mexico.....	26	57	46	"
½ mile NE. of Monclova, Mexico.....	26	54	44.26	"
Castaña, Mexico*.....	26	47	00	"
Bajan, Mexico*.....	26	34	30	"
La Joya, Mexico*.....	26	23	15	"
Near hacienda Venadito, Mexico.....	26	02	11	"
Three miles from hacienda Saucedo, Mexico.....	25	45	17.4	"
San Antonio, (de Jarral,) Mexico.....	25	33	55.7	"
Pastora, Mexico.....	25	38	46.3	"
Cienega Grande, Mexico.....	25	33	40.7	"
1½ mile north of Parras, Mexico.....	25	26	48	"
Parras, Mexico.....	25	25	00	"
Hacienda Castañuela, Mexico, (probably).....	25	25	24	"
Hacienda Los Muchachos, Mexico.....	25	17	58.5	"
Saltillo, Mexico.....	25	26	22	"
Hacienda Patos, Mexico.....	25	22	31	"
Agua Nueva, Mexico.....	25	11	43.6	"
Monterey, Mexico.....	25	40	13	"

The above latitudes were determined by observations with the sextant upon the north star, (Polaris.)

Corpus Christi, (according to Captain Cram,)

Texas.....	27°	47'	17".87	north.
North end of Padre island, Texas.....	27	37	00	"
Brasos Santiago, Texas.....	26	06	00	"
Boca del Rio Grande, Texas.....	25	58	00	"

*Recapitulation of longitudes observed and calculated.*

	In arc.		Time.	
San Antonio, Texas.....	98°	52' 30"	6h. 42m. 4.8s.	
Presidio del Rio Grande....	100	31 12		
Right bank Sabino's river...	101	33 00	(Observed by J. Gregg.)	
Monclova.....	101	39 18	6h. 46m. 37.2s.	
Saltillo.....	101	01 45	6h. 44m. 7s.	
Monterey.....	100	25 36	6h. 41m. 42s.	
Corpus Christi, (according to				
Captain Cram,).....	97	27 02.5	west of Greenwich, accord-	
			ing to Captain Cram.	
Brasos Santiago.....	97	12 00		

\* Observed by Mr. J. Gregg.



These longitudes were all determined by observations on the eclipses of Jupiter's satellites, except that of Saltillo, which was determined by the method of lunar distances.

[The above determinations are the result of 350 observations, besides the independent ones by Mr. Gregg, of which he kindly permitted us to avail ourselves, and are filed in the Topographical Bureau for future use.—Geo. W. HUGHES.]

NOTE.—The river San Antonio flows into the Guadalupe not far from the debouche of the latter on the bay of Esperitu Santo, and both are presented as being navigable for steamboats, the San Antonio to Goliad, (and in the rainy season for a much greater distance,) and the Guadalupe some twenty miles above Victoria. A short railroad has been projected from Indian Point, at the mouth of La Vaca river, in Matagorda bay, to the mouth of the San Antonio. When this work is completed it will open an excellent communication through San Antonio de Bexar for the Chihuahua and Santa Fe trade, taking the route recently discovered by Colonel Hays to the mouth of the Conchos river, an affluent of the Rio Grande, from which point there are excellent roads to Chihuahua and to Paso del Norte. The trade to the upper and interior portion of Coahuila would also naturally take this direction to San Antonio, which would thus become an important commercial entrepot.





22°  
S. E. Doc. No. 32  
1st Ser. 31st Con.

# MAP

Showing the Route of the  
**ARKANSAS REGIMENT**

from Shreveport La. to  
San Antonio de Bexar  
Texas.

